

NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

**FIFTY
FAMOUS
FILMS**

1915-1945

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s : 1915-1945



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DAVID H. SHEPARD

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FILMS**

1915—1945

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE

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FOREWORD

THE PUBLICATION in a single booklet of the Programme Notes covering fifty major films in the history of the Cinema drawn from our own National Film Archive and the Film Archives of other countries is one of several innovations.

We believe our members will find it more convenient to have the Notes in this form. Apart from being less expensive for those who come regularly to the theatre, it is hoped that the booklet will have some value as a permanent reference work.

James Quinn
DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOKLET is the work of many people who have been associated with the National Film Theatre during the past eight years. Apart from the contributions which are credited in the text, there are critical assessments by Lotte Eisner (Cinémathèque Française), Penelope Houston (editor of "Sight and Sound"), Gavin Lambert (lately editor of "Sight and Sound"), Ernest Lindgren (Curator of the National Film Archive), Rachael Low (film historian and author), Liam O'Laoghaire (Film Acquisitions Officer of the National Film Archive), and Karel Reisz (film director).

We take this opportunity of thanking them for their work which has helped so much to bring this present series of National Film Archive programmes into existence.

In addition, these programmes could also not exist without the active co-operation of the entire film industry. Particular assistance has been given for the present series by:

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BIRTH OF A NATION

U.S.A., 1915

12 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Epoch Producing Corporation (D. W. Griffith)
 DIRECTION: D. W. Griffith
 SCRIPT: D. W. Griffith and Frank Woods, from the
 novel "The Clansman" by the Rev. Thomas
 Dixon, Jr.
 PHOTOGRAPHY: G. W. Bitzer

CAST

Elsie Stoneman	Lillian Gish
Flora Cameron	Mae Marsh
Col. Ben Cameron	Henry B. Walthall
Margaret Cameron	Mirian Cooper
Lydia, Stoneman's Housekeeper	Mary Alden
Hon. Austin Stoneman	Ralph Lewis
Silas Lynch	George Seigmann
Gus	Walter Long
Tod Stoneman	Robert Harron
Jeff, the blacksmith	Wallace Reid
Abraham Lincoln	Joseph Henaberry
Phil Stoneman	Elmer Clifton
Mrs. Cameron	Josephine Crowell
Dr. Cameron	Spottiswoode Aiken
Wade Cameron	J. A. Beringer
Duke Cameron	Maxfield Stanley
Mammy	Jennie Lee
General V. S. Grant	Donald Crisp
General Robert E. Lee	Howard Gaye

BORN in Kentucky, U.S.A., in 1875, Griffith had to start earning his living at an early age. Soon tiring of clerks' and salesmen's jobs, he decided he wanted to be a writer and attached himself to the "Louisville Courier". He had several short stories and poems published, and a drama staged in Washington. This last success, though a minor one, was sufficient to rouse his interest in the stage, and at 27, after some experience as a stage actor, he became employed by the Biograph Company where he played his first film part in Edwin S. Porter's *Rescued from an Eagle's Nest*. Finding he could make as much as five dollars a day acting in the movies, and even more by writing for them, he stayed with the Biograph Company although his ambition to write—particularly for the stage—remained.

In 1908, owing to the illness of one of the directors of the Company, he began his own directing career when he took over the making of *The Adventures*

of *Dolly*. For the next four years, until he left Biograph and began producing films on the epic scale, he directed films at an average rate of one a week.

It was during this period that he explored and developed the use of film editing, and transformed the film from a primitive method of pictorial storytelling into an expressive medium of immense possibilities which were subsequently to be explored by later directors. Griffith's methods sprang from a comparatively simple idea, namely that of moving the camera nearer to the actors to obtain a more detailed view of their reactions. This had, of course, been done before; he did not, as is sometimes claimed, "invent" the close-up. Unlike his predecessors, however, he instinctively realised that the close-up was something more than an insert, an interruption to the smooth flow of the dramatic action; it was the key to a new technique of film-making. The close shot gives us a single detail of a scene, the rest being excluded; but the rest can be supplied by other close shots of other details. In other words, instead of showing a dramatic scene in a single full shot, which is the method of the theatre, it can be built up, both in the director's imagination and in fact, by a succession of shots of detail (technically made possible, of course, by the fact that it is quite easy both to cut cinematograph film, and to join separate strips together).

This method not only brings the spectator nearer to the dramatic action, indeed into the midst of it, and thus makes it more vivid. It also gives the director a far greater control over his material. It enables him to select only the most significant details of a scene, to show them from a wide variety of viewpoints (a small change of camera viewpoint in a long shot is hardly noticeable; in a close shot it can produce an entirely different picture), and to vary the length of his cutting pieces in order to control the pace and tempo of the scene. It replaces the artificial theatrical view of life seen through a proscenium by a method which corresponds much more to our everyday visual experience. As Lewis Jacobs expressed it, in his "Rise of the American Film", 'Griffith suddenly understood (that) in movie making, guiding the camera, even more than directing the actor, is the trick.'

In his two major films, *The Birth of a Nation* (1914) and *Intolerance* (1916) D. W. Griffith utilised his new discoveries with a maturity and power which astonished the world at the time, and which have seldom been equalled since, despite the great technical progress made by the cinema in other ways. Parts of *The Birth of a Nation* were savagely attacked on the grounds that they showed an anti-Negro bias. Griffith denied this, and considered the attacks unjust. *Intolerance*, therefore, became in some measure a personal protest against the way he had been treated; at the same time, of course, it is very much more.

For the purposes of generalisation it may be said that the cinema received its final recognition as a new artistic force on the occasion of the premiere of *Birth of a Nation* at the Liberty Theatre, on 3rd March, 1915. True, it had a previous showing in Los Angeles under its original title of *The Clansman*, but the New York run brought the film into the limelight of world opinion and the result was nothing short of revolutionary.

The film enshrined all that Griffith had learned about the visual presentation of a story during his apprenticeship as director of some hundreds of shorter films and less ambitious subjects. With one grand leap into the saddle Griffith took command of the film industry as its leading creative artist and led it to a position which it has never lost in the affection of cinema audiences.

Not merely did Griffith establish the claims of the cinema to be an art but he challenged the supremacy of the theatre and presented it with a serious rival. From now on the cinema was regarded as a powerful artistic and social manifestation of the age.

In taking the novel "The Clansman" Griffith was committed to the depiction of the American Civil War and the Reconstruction Period in the Old South in terms of Southern bias and anti-negro prejudice which, in effect, comes through pretty strongly in the film. The glorification of the by then notorious Ku Klux Klan and the scurvy delineation of the coloured race in the film are blemishes which no plea of historical accuracy can minimise. The showing of the film has been in many cases the signal for outbreaks of anti-negro feeling. On the other hand, it appears that Griffith, carried away no doubt by his personal allegiances and the creative ambition of his work ignored the implications contained in it and may be quite genuinely sincere when he claims that he was recording history and had no intention of defaming a race he had the warmest regard for. This is old controversy now and, as if to atone for misunderstandings, his next work was a passionate plea for tolerance. A charitable view may imply indiscretion rather than malice.

The vast scale of the film called for production in a way never before visualised in movies. The finance was provided by private backers and the film was really made completely outside the scope of the existing industry. Griffith's company, Epoch Producing Corporation, expended 110,000 dollars on the film. This, a trifling sum today, was considered at the time to be a monstrous outlay.

After six weeks of rehearsal, shooting commenced on the 4th July, 1914, and the first shots covered were those of the Civil War. Locations were mainly situated in the hills and valleys of Southern California. Interiors were shot at the Fine Arts Studio in the outskirts of Hollywood, then little more than a village. The total filming period ran from July to October.

The tremendous organisation of personnel and shooting schedules, and the planning of photography were carried through by the indomitable will of Griffith. And when the three and a half months' editing was complete the problem of distribution had to be tackled since the Hollywood producers refused to handle the picture.

The presentation of the film in New York for a consecutive run of forty-four weeks inaugurated what has come to be accepted as modern de luxe film presentation.

The film which contained 1,375 individual shots totalled twelve reels with a footage of about 12,500 feet. Griffith's players had been familiar figures in his earlier films and many such as Donald Crisp, Raoul Walsh, Joseph Henaberry

and Erich von Stroheim (who appears in a tiny coloured rôle) were to become important film directors in their subsequent careers.

Gilbert Seldes in his appreciation of the film wrote: "To this picture Griffith gave the fundamental brainwork which a work of art, however inspired, must have; it has structure, proportion, coherence and integrity. It can be separated into a dozen different themes or stories, but it obstinately remains one film, into which all the parts are woven . . . The rhythms are delicately felt; the whole picture has pace and sweep."

The correct use of technical devices subordinated to artistic effect distinguishes the film in many ways. The carefully chosen viewpoints, the camera flexibility, the use of natural scenes, the realism especially of the battle scenes and the emotionally expressive editing treatment were to set headlines for future film directors in both America and Europe.

INTOLERANCE

U.S.A., 1916 13 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Wark Producing Corporation (D. W. Griffith)
 DIRECTION: D. W. Griffith
 SCRIPT: D. W. Griffith (modern story based on "The Mother and the Law" and records of the Stielow murder case)
 PHOTOGRAPHY: G. W. Bitzer and Karl Brown
 CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR: Frank Wortman
 ASSISTANT DIRECTION: George Siegmann, W. S. van Dyke, Joseph Henaberry, Erich von Stroheim, Edward Dillon, Tod Browning

CAST

ALL AGES:
 The Woman Who Rocks the Cradle Lillian Gish
MODERN STORY (1914 A.D.):
 The Dear One Mae Marsh
 Her Father, a mill worker Fred Turner
 The Boy Robert Harron
 Jerkins, mill magnate Sam de Grasse
 Mary Jenkins, his sister Vera Lewis
 Strike Leader Monte Blue
 Two Crooks Tod Browning, Edward Dillon
JUDEAN STORY (27 A.D.):
 The Nazarene Howard Gaye
 Mary, the mother Lillian Langdon
 Mary Magdalene Olga Grey
 First Pharisee Erich von Stroheim
 Second Pharisee Gunther von Ritzau
 Bride of Gana Bessie Love
MEDIEVAL FRENCH STORY (1572 A.D.):
 Brown Eyes, daughter of a Huguenot family .. Margery Wilson
 Prosper Latour, her sweetheart Eugene Pallette
 Charles IX, King of France Frank Bennett
 Catherine de Medici Josephine Crowell
 Marguerite de Valois, sister of Charles IX .. Constance Talmadge
 Duc d'Anjou, heir to the Throne Maxfield Stanley
BABYLONIAN STORY (539 B.C.):
 The Mountain Girl Constance Talmadge
 The Rhapsode, her suitor and secret agent of the High Priest of Bel Elmer Clifton
 The Prince Belshazzar Alfred Paget
 The Princess Beloved, adored of Belshazzar .. Seena Owen
 The King Nabonidus, ancient apostle of religious toleration Carl Stockdale

The High Priest of Bel, who conspires against the Throne	Tully Marshall
Cyrus, emperor and war lord of the Persians, world-conqueror	George Siegmann
Gobyras, the Mighty Man of Valour, Belshazzar's bodyguard	Elmo Lincoln
Captain at the Great Gate of Imgur-Bel	Ted Duncan
Solo Dancer	Ruth St. Denis

Slave Girls, Dancers, Hand-Maidens
from Ishtar's Temple of Love: Virgins
of the Sacred Fires of Life: Entertainers
at Belshazzar's Feast, etc., etc. ..

Triangle Theatre "stars" and featured
players, who played "bit" parts
or "extra" rôles

{ Alma Rubens, Carmel Myers, Pauline
Starke, Mildred Harris Chaplin (Mrs.
Charles Chaplin), Eve Southern,
Winifred Westover, Jewel Carmen,
Colleen Moore, Natalie Talmadge,
Carol Dempster, Ethel Terry, Daisy
Robinson, Anna Mae Walthall (Anna
Mae Wong?) The Denishawn Dancers
and other Players from the Triangle
Theatre.
{ Douglas Fairbanks, Sir Herbert
Beerbohm Tree, De Wolf Hopper,
Frank Campeau, Donald Crisp,
Nigel de Brulier, Wilfred Lucas,
Owen Moore, Andre Beranger, Tam-
many Young, Francis Carpenter.

Supported by a cast of some 20,000 "extras" players, engaged from the popu-
lations of the Californian coastal towns and suburbs.

THE FOUR STORIES

TO ILLUSTRATE the philosophy of history as thus outlined, Griffith chose four stories, separate in time and space, but interrelated by the common theme (intolerance), and projected through cinematic "cross-cutting in parallel sequence" (*i.e.* the action is not shown in the form of four separate stories; instead, the action constantly interchanges between the four stories, thus stressing the Theme common to each). The Four stories of *Intolerance* are as follows:

(1). *THE JUDEAN STORY*, or the life of Jesus of Nazareth (A.D.27). This depicts the conflict of Jesus with the Pharisees, the Jewish rabbinate and with Rome. The organized opposition of the rabbinate against the "Man of Men" (subtitle), with his revolutionary "New Law", is cited as an example of ecclesiastical intolerance, affecting the lives of future millions of people.

(2). *THE MEDIEVAL STORY*, or the war between the Catholics and the Huguenots, in 16th-Century France (A.D. 1572). The story dramatizes the strife in the 16th century between the Catholic hierarchy of France and the rising Protestant movement; it culminates in a bloody climax—the massacre of the Huguenots, on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. Religious intolerance.

(3). *THE FALL OF BABYLON*, in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar—an epic of the Ancient World (B.C. 539). In Griffith's history, Babylon falls as the result of

an act of treason by the established theological hierarchy under the dictatorship of the High Priest of Bel. The High Priest fears and fights the introduction into Babylon of new religions from without, and of new liberalising political or social ideas from within. Accordingly, when the State-religion of Babylon is threatened with rivalry—when it can no longer dictate, unchallenged, the pattern of the national culture—then the High Priest and his cohorts among the hierarchy betray Belshazzar's empire-city to Cyrus, world-conqueror, emperor and war-lord of the Persians. Imperialistic-political, religious, and racial intolerance.

(4). *THE MODERN STORY (The Mother and the Law)* (circa. A.D. 1914). Finally, the Modern Story, the opening sequences of which are the first to appear in *Intolerance*, dramatizes the struggle between Capital and Labour (class-hatred), in the early years of the 20th Century, in the United States of America. Economic and Social intolerance.

(5). *EPILOGUE (The Future)*. Upon the conclusion of the four stories, there follows an Epilogue, in which Griffith prophesies in spectacular imagery a future Armageddon (or war) for the world; the bombing of New York City in an unnamed conflict of the future; weird modern instruments of war; the ultimate downfall of all worldly tyrannies; the elimination of prisons and other places of incarceration; the ultimate liberation of all men and all nations from every form of bondage; the advent of universal peace through universal love; and, at the climax of climaxes, an Apocalyptic vision. This final imagery follows the sub-title: "And perfect love shall bring peace forevermore."

The theme of *Intolerance* is the age-old struggle of men against intolerance: or, as Griffith saw it, the struggle between intolerance and love (the film was publicised as "Love's struggle throughout the Ages"). In order to emphasize that the conflict was a never-ending one, Griffith decided to present it in four separate stories, taken from four periods of history, told concurrently and intermingled as the film proceeds. The narrative is punctuated at intervals by the figure of a mother, rocking "the Cradle of Destiny". This daring conception is not entirely successful. While it gave Griffith a vast canvas, and enabled him to secure some striking effects of tempo in the relating of one story to another, it also splits spectators' attention insuperably between the various stories which is doubtless responsible for its ponderous and exhausting effect on most people.

Intolerance was a lavishly expensive film for its period, costing two million dollars to make, (one million came from Griffith's own profits on *The Birth of a Nation*). The cost was enormous and no expense was spared to secure realism in the historical settings; the sets for the "Babylonian Story" were constructed full size and it is improbable that their like will be seen again since such effects in a modern film will be obtained more economically by the use of models and other special effects.

"The Modern Story," in *Intolerance* was originally conceived by Griffith as a single complete film under the title of *The Mother and the Law*. It was undoubtedly the social implications in this story which caused Lenin to arrange for

Intolerance to be toured throughout the Soviet Union where it ran almost continuously for ten years. It was closely studied by young Russian directors of the new Soviet cinema in the early 'twenties and it exercised a profound influence on men like Eisenstein and Pudovkin.

The following quotation from Film Notes issued by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library may be of interest.

'Though *Intolerance* has been revived time and again, especially in Europe, unlike *The Birth of a Nation* it was not a popular success. Audiences find it bewildering, exhausting. There is so much in it; there is too much of it; the pace increases so relentlessly; its abrupt hail of images—many of them only five frames long—cruelly hammers the sensibility; its climax is near hysteria. No question but that the film is chaotic, or that it has many faults. The desire to instruct and to reform obtrudes awkwardly. The lyricism of the sub-titles accords oddly with the foot-notes appended to them. The Biblical sequence is weak, though useful dramatically to point up the modern sequence. The French episode gets lost, then reappears surprisingly. And, as Pudovkin says, "There is a strong discrepancy between the depth of the motif and the superficiality of its form."

'Of the Babylonian and the modern episodes little adverse criticism is permissible and only admiration remains in face of the last two reels, when the climax of all four stories approaches and history itself seems to pour like a cataract across the screen. In his direction of the immense crowd scenes, Griffith achieves the impossible for—despite their profusion and breath-taking scale—the eye is not distracted, it is irresistibly drawn to the one significant detail. The handling of the actors in intimate scenes has seldom been equalled, particularly in the modern sequence. This searching realism, this pulsing life comes not only from Griffith's power to mould his players but, in equal measure, from his editorial skill.'

In conclusion, there follows a series of notes taken from the researches by the distinguished American film historian Seymour Stern, which provide further details on the immensity of the undertaking as a whole:

ABSENCE OF FILM-SCRIPT. For reasons of secrecy, *Intolerance*, the most massive and complex film ever made, was shot from beginning to end without recourse to any form of written Scenario or Script of any kind! As a result, the nature of Griffith's film was kept a complete secret, from the first day of "shooting" until the time of its first public exhibition.

THE SETS. These are celebrated throughout film history, especially the fabulous sets for the Babylonian story. These sets for "Belshazzar's empire-city" were erected on a site of 254 acres . . . it can be said with truth that Griffith built a full-sized replica of the City of Babylon on this site, using for his material mud-brick and wood on stone basis. The towers of Babylon's encircling walls reached a height of 200 feet, but Griffith's masterpiece was his reconstruction of the "Hall of Belshazzar's Feast." This fantastically enormous set consisted of an immense outdoor Court, centred in terraced steps and lion-headed balustrades, and colonnaded on opposite sides with overtowering, over-life-size sculptured elephants;

these were poised, forelegs aloft, on columnar bases fifty feet above the set-floor. The Hall was designed to accommodate, without crowding, five thousand persons at a time.

CROWD-SCENES. In these, as in the sets, everything was on a lavish scale. The largest 'mass-shot' in screen history is that depicting the final assault by Cyrus's Armies on the Walls of Babylon; in this scene, more than 16,000 "extras" appear at one time on the screen. Griffith himself has stated that, during the two years of production, about 60,000 "extras" in all were employed; each was paid \$2 a day for eight hours, plus a 60-cent free lunch.

COST OF PRODUCTION. The total cost of the film, in 1916, was two million dollars. The greater part of the cost went on the Babylonian sequences, which cost in all some 650,000 dollars. Of this sum, some 250,000 dollars was spent on building the Hall of Belshazzar's Feast, while the 'Princess Beloved's' costume for the same scene cost 8,000 dollars.

In 1936, twenty years after its original release, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer 'budgeted' the film in an effort to estimate its cost under current conditions. The estimate revealed that if the same film were made in that year by that studio, shot-by-shot as it had been made in 1915-16, but with Union labour, stars' salaries, etc, and with the addition of "sound", the production cost would be around Twelve Million Dollars. On a relative scale, therefore, *Intolerance* remains the most expensive film ever produced in the History of the Motion Picture.

The really significant feature of Griffith's "Babylon" was the fact that, despite all its titanic dimensions, it was completely unplanned; G. W. Bitzer (in charge of Photography of the film) states: "Imagine setting out what were to be the mammoth sets for *Intolerance* without any sketches, plans or blue-prints at the beginning . . . Griffith, myself and Wortman (Set Engineer) would have a 'pow-wow' on the spot . . . that was the beginning of a set for *Intolerance*, to which, as it progressed and became a fifty-foot high structure, a hundred feet or more long, Mr Griffith kept continually adding . . . eventually, the walls and towers soared to a height of well over a hundred and fifty feet, although the foundations were originally intended for a fifty-foot height!"

BROKEN BLOSSOMS

U.S.A., 1919

7 reels

DIRECTION: D. W. Griffith

SCRIPT: D. W. Griffith, based on "The Chink and the Child", a short story in a collection called "Limehouse Nights" by Thomas Burke.

PHOTOGRAPHY: G. W. Bitzer and Hendrik Sartov

CAST

Lucy, the Girl	..	..	..	..	..	Lillian Gish
The Yellow Man	..	..	..	..	..	Richard Barthelmess
Battling Burrows	..	..	..	..	..	Donald Crisp
His Manager	..	..	..	..	..	Arthur Howard
Evil Eye	..	..	..	..	..	Edward Pell
The Spying One	..	..	..	..	..	George Beranger
A Prizefighter	..	..	..	..	..	Norman Selly

GRIFFITH returned to Hollywood in 1919 after a two years' absence in Europe where he had made *Hearts of the World*. In February he founded, together with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin a new distributing company, United Artists, and the film he made in May of the same year was to be the first important picture to be handled by the new company. *Broken Blossoms* is an adaptation of a short story by Thomas Burke and tells a simple fairy tale of the London slums. The Girl, living in the shadow and constant fear of her brutish father, Battling Burrows, is befriended by the Yellow Man, an idealistic, high-minded Chinese store-keeper, who loves and protects her. The father finds out that she is associating with a Chinaman and beats her to death. The Yellow Man, seeing his dream of peace and love with the gentle Girl shattered, shoots Battling Burrows and himself commits suicide.

All Griffith's films carry a message and he made it quite clear that he meant *Broken Blossoms* to be an allegory. "We may believe," he wrote in the opening title, "there are no Battling Burrows striking the helpless with a cruel whip—but do we not ourselves use the whips of unkind words and deeds? Battling may even carry a message of warning." This ingenious disclaimer at once explains the hardly credible bestiality of the villain and justifies the use of what is a rather crude melodramatic plot.

But the film needs no disclaimer of this kind. Griffith has treated the story with a gentleness, a direct concentration on the human relationships eschewing all extraneous detail, that gives *Broken Blossoms* an ethereal, lyrical quality found nowhere else in his work. It has, moreover, an austere simplicity one would not

have believed the maker of *Intolerance* capable of achieving. The misty photography which achieves at times wonderful pictorial effects—and gives the patently studio-built Limehouse a strangely mysterious air—was another remarkably original feat by Griffith's cameraman D. W. Bitzer. (The film, incidentally, appeared at a time when 'clear' photography was often advertised on posters as a great asset and reviewers were quick to point out of *Broken Blossoms* that the misty pictorial effects were intentional).

To those who know Griffith only as the maker of *Intolerance* and *Birth of a Nation*, and think of him primarily as a technical innovator with a particular flair for the crowd scene, will find *Broken Blossoms* at once a disappointment and a revelation. The disappointment, perhaps, will be short-lived: there are, it is true, few of the startling editing effects that characterises Griffith's more famous films—in particular, there are very few close shots—but this, strangely, has led to a film of greater not lesser intimacy. The camera dwells throughout on the players and the effects are allowed to come across in the first place through the acting. The film is a revelation in the sense that it has a maturity, a sense of style unobtrusively wedded to content that is at once effortless and more sophisticated than Griffith's other films.

Griffith introduced *Broken Blossoms* with these words: "It is a tale of temple bells, sounding at sunset before the image of the Buddha; it is a tale of love and lovers; it is a tale of tears." This sets the key of the narrative well; but the film is more a tale of Griffith's conception of love in general than of particular lovers. Nowhere, even in the silent cinema, have three characters been more rigid personifications of abstract qualities: the Girl of helpless innocence, the Yellow Man of undemanding love, Battling Burrows of evil. The Girl's innocent, gratefully submissive behaviour to the Yellow Man is presented with a purity bordering on prudishness and the Yellow Man himself becomes the nearest thing to a saint that one can imagine existing in the Griffith world. The brief idyll is enacted in an atmosphere of almost embarrassing holiness in which kindness rather than love is the dominating emotion. And while this is undoubtedly Griffith's intention, it gives the centre of the film a certain lack of definition. Perhaps, as has been suggested, Griffith, after making war films, wanted *Broken Blossoms* to be a tribute to humility and spiritual grace and felt that sex had no part in such a venture. Even if one accepts this, however, one cannot help wishing that the forces of good in the film were not quite so negative, that the Girl and the Yellow Man made, somewhere, some kind of gesture of protest.

Mention has been made of Griffith's reliance on his actors and he has got marvellous performances from his young players. Richard Barthelmess plays the Yellow Man with a restraint and tenderness rare in the silent cinema. Lillian Gish, playing for the first time the part of the slum girl—a part she was often to repeat—gives the more intimate scene that touching directness which is always hers. The scenes of her hysteria carry a terrible force and one is not surprised to read in her biography (Arthur Bigelow Paine's "Life of Lillian Gish") how carefully they were studied.

"The closet scene was the climax—the terrible moment where Lucy's father is breaking in to kill her. Nobody could rehearse that for her. For three days and nights, she rehearsed it almost without sleep. Small wonder, then, that the hysterical terror of the child's face was scarcely acting at all, but reality. It is said that when the scene was 'shot,' there was an assemblage of silent, listening people outside the studio, awe-struck by Lillian's screams. Griffith, throughout the scene, sat staring, saying not a word. Her face, during the final assault and struggle, became a veritable whirling medley of terror, its flashing glimpses of agony beyond anything ever shown before or since on the screen. When it was ended, Griffith was as white as paper. 'Why didn't you tell me you were going to do that?' he asked, shakily. 'What impressed us all,' writes Harry Carr (he had become Griffith's assistant), 'was that all her reactions were those of a child. Her wild terror in the closet scene—the finest example of emotional hysteria in the history of the screen—was the terror of a child.' Carr further remembers that she had been to several hospitals, to study hysteria, and to enquire how one would be likely to die, from beating."

Paine also describes the genesis of a famous gesture which recurs throughout the film. "It was during this strenuous period that Lillian evolved what Griffith calls 'the one original bit of business that has been introduced into the art of screen acting.' In his ghastly preparation for beating Lucy, Battling Burrows pauses, and commands her to smile. Griffith and Lillian had discussed how this could be done most effectively. Then, in the midst of the scene, Lillian had an inspiration. Lifting her hand, she spread her fingers and pushed up the corners of her mouth. The effect was tremendous. 'Do that again!' shouted Griffith, and then repeated the scene until they got that heart-wringing bit of technique to suit them. Griffith couldn't get over it." It remains to add that the gesture, though effective enough for the first time, becomes through repetition one of the few false strokes of the film.

The part of Battling Burrows is played by Donald Crisp, later to gain distinction as the co-director of Buster Keaton's *The Navigator* and director of Fairbanks' *Don Quixote*. The part is so violent and unshaded in conception that one cannot conceive an actor playing it with much finesse but Crisp certainly makes no attempt to supply any.

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI

(DAS KABINETT VON DR. CALIGARI)

GERMANY, 1919

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Dekla-Bioscop
DIRECTION:	Robert Wiene
SCRIPT:	Karl Mayer and Hans Janowitz
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Willie Hameister
ART DIRECTION:	Walter Reimann, Hermann Warn, Walter Roehrig

CAST

Dr. Caligari and the Doctor	..	..	..	<i>Werner Krauss</i>
Cesare ..	..	..	..	.. <i>Conrad Veidt</i>
Jane Olsen	..	..	..	<i>Lil Dagover</i>
Francis	..	..	..	<i>Friedrich Feher</i>
Alan ..	..	..	..	<i>Hans von Twardowski</i>
Dr. Olsen	..	..	..	<i>Rudolf Lettinger</i>
Criminal	..	..	..	<i>Rudolf Klein-Roggee</i>

THE experimental side of the German film industry immediately after the First World War was largely in the hands of one man—Erich Pommer. It was therefore to him that Mayer and Janowitz went with their idea for making *Caligari*. For Hans Janowitz this production constituted the only film work he ever did, and of Mayer, Paul Rotha has written: "He never wrote a play, a book or an article. He wrote only in film terms." Born in Austria, Mayer was twenty-five years of age when Pommer agreed to film his story of *Caligari*, and the production was for him the beginning of a notable film career. He continued to work in Germany, scripting such films as the famous *The Last Laugh*, until 1932 when he left to work in Paris with Elisabeth Bergner. A year later he came to London and collaborated, largely in an advisory capacity, with Rotha (*World of Plenty*) and Gabriel Pascal (*Pygmalion*). He died in London in 1944. His method of scripting, later to provide in *Sunrise* a model for Hollywood scriptwriters, was begun in his story of *Caligari* which was planned in the greatest detail before actual production began. Fritz Lang who was to direct, proved at the last moment to be unavailable and Robert Wiene who had been responsible a few months earlier for the unsuccessful experimental film *Genuine*, was chosen because this film was in many respects similar to *Caligari*.

Based on an old legend, the story of the film is set within the framework of the modern world. Unlike, however, the majority of the films made in the immediate post-war years, *Caligari* does not picture its modern world as the conventional, realistic setting shown, for example, in the early Lubitsch films (*Anna Boleyn* was made in 1920). The story—in itself a melodrama—is depicted as a dream, the dream of a madman. It is significant to note here that the original script was not placed within the frame of a madman's dream, but was a straightforward story. In order to create the neurotic tension Mayer's script demanded the three designers, Reimann, Warm and Roehrig, painted the background scenery as a stage set distorted from the normal. In this they were strongly influenced by the surrealist and expressionist painting of the post-war German artists like Gross, and also by the expressionist plays of Toller and Georg Kaiser. These artists, like the makers of *Caligari*, wanted to express emotion subjectively. The whole of *Caligari* is seen and felt through the eyes and senses of one individual. And as this individual is a madman, the feelings expressed are wholly neurotic. In order to put this into effect, the scenery was made to represent familiar shapes broken up into unfamiliar patterns of light and shadow. The hurly-burly atmosphere of the fairground is distorted in a grotesque fashion to point the tragedy that is set in what is normally a place of gaiety and laughter. The death of Alan takes place in a room divided into angular patterns, unnatural to the normal eye, but expressing the hero's feelings at the death of his friend. There is thus no attempt to narrate the action objectively. The event in itself is of minor importance compared to the feelings of the characters.

Siegfried Kracauer, in his "From Caligari to Hitler," maintains it is no mere coincidence that the first expressionist film should have been produced in Germany. The defeat of the nation, and the social and economic chaos after the war contrasted too sharply with the complacent order of the pre-war years; the whole of German art at this period reflects the resulting neurosis in Germany. The style of acting of the Reinhardt theatre was at the time part of the reaction against realism, and expressionist plays like "Gas I" and "Masses and Men" required a technique of acting and production quite unlike the realism of the Stanislavsky school in the Moscow Arts Theatre or the story film presenting a study of behaviour. Pommer therefore chose his actors from the German stage. Werner Krauss (playing Caligari) and Conrad Veidt, the somnambulist, made their film debuts in *Caligari*, and both continued, in long and successful screen careers, to play in the same style: Veidt in *Waxworks* and *The Student of Prague*; and Krauss notably in *Metropolis*.

Set against the grotesque scenery of the film, the acting, too, became completely stylised in order to express the feelings evoked by the madman's dreams. An anecdote is told of Krauss coming on to the set one day, and on being told that his make-up was too realistic, he dipped his fingertips into some coal dust and ran them down his face. The director, seeing the result, commented: "That is exactly what I want," and the make-up stayed.

The film was never a financial success, yet in spite of this, it founded a whole

school of film-making in Germany with *Waxworks* (1922), Fritz Lang's *Niebelungen* (1923), and *Metropolis* (1926). These films were all consciously trying to express something of vital importance to their creators. They became, thus, part of the general artistic movement of their time and were accepted as works of art in a new medium. The historical importance of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* lies in the fact that it was the first film of this new school, and by far the most sensational in its effect.

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari was originally tinted blue and amber, and the titles were written in sloping handwriting. The film was first released in England in April, 1924.

FOOLISH WIVES

U.S.A., 1921

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Universal
 DIRECTOR: Erich von Stroheim
 SCRIPT: Erich von Stroheim
 ASSISTANTS: Eddy Sowders and Louis Germonprez
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Ben Reynolds
 ART DIRECTION: Erich von Stroheim and Captain Richard Day

CAST

"Count Wladislas Sergei Karamzin"	..	..	..	<i>Erich von Stroheim</i>
"A Russian Princess, his cousin"	..	..	..	<i>Maude George</i>
"A Russian Princess, his cousin"	..	..	..	<i>Mae Busch</i>
The counterfeiter	..	..	..	<i>Cesare Gravina</i>
His daughter	..	..	..	<i>Malvine Polo</i>
American Ambassador	..	..	..	<i>George Christians</i>
His wife	..	..	..	<i>Miss Dupont</i>
Maid to the "Russian Princesses"	..	..	..	<i>Dale Fuller</i>

It is significant that the title *Foolish Wives*—like that of *Blind Husbands*—is in the plural although in both cases Stroheim used a single example. In both films, Stroheim, the social critic, uses the special case—the case of the obtuse, money-loving American husband who lets his wife become an easy prey for the Continental seducer—not for its own sake, but rather as a symptom of the easy-going, pleasure-eager post-1918 epoch. For Stroheim is not like Lubitsch, the smiling *boulevardier* who, smoking his fat cigar, tells his half-sugary, half-spicy adventures with an amused complacency while really admiring the rich, idle life. In Stroheim, the moralist is always awake. If, in spite of everything, he is sometimes attracted towards evil which interests him psychologically, and even if he shows a certain sympathy for his uniformed seducers and his sophisticated, platinum blonde ladies, he always inflicts on them the fate they deserve in the unhappy endings. The climax of *Foolish Wives* carries in dramatic terms Stroheim's moral judgment on his characters.

Foolish Wives, made in 1920/21, already reveals Stroheim's full range. The lavishness of luxurious settings foreshadows *The Wedding March* and *Queen Kelly*: Stroheim already knew the dramatic value of correctly and completely observed backgrounds. The dwellings, with their rich columns and tapestries, their terraces adorned with balustrades, the immense interiors in which light and shade float in a soft haze engulfing the senses—all these are used for a purpose, never for their own sake. The sumptuous decor is a minutely worked out

accompaniment to the situations, throwing the behaviour of characters into deeper relief. Stroheim, who delights in lavish decor, who knows how to make the facade of the Monte Carlo Casino glow and glitter with the thousand lights of a Mediterranean night, can suddenly, when he needs a different effect, abandon all this splendour for a simple shot of the sea.

The majestic grandeur of vast stretches of mirror-like parquet can become intimidating. At the reception given by the Prince of Monaco, we see the nervous American Ambassador advance across the enormous spectacular rooms, at the end of all this magnificence of smooth, seemingly limitless parquet floors, there appears to us on the throne—in fiercely ironical contrast—the sad, feeble silhouette of a most melancholy gentleman, the reigning prince. What an accumulation of grandeur for a poor scrap of humanity! The Ambassador, obtuse as ever, sees nothing of this incongruity: he is completely engrossed in the problem of pulling off a recalcitrant glove.

Elsewhere, Stroheim's romanticism makes of the old peasant woman's hut a kind of novelette version of a witch's cave, in which old cushions, curtains and strangely grotesque clothes abound. Equally rich in ornament are the shots of the flower-strewn procession of gondolas, illuminated by a thousand glittering lanterns. Stroheim delights in juggling with all these voluptuous images and it becomes difficult to distinguish between his fascination in them and his desire to expose the futility of the luxury-hungry epoch.

In *Foolish Wives*, Stroheim has not yet discovered the poverty which he was later to show in *Greed*. Though he views the lives of the wealthy with a searching realism, he only shows the picturesque parts of the impoverished Italianised region of the Cote d'Azur. The dense, almost frightening atmosphere which he evokes for us on the prince's first visit to the counterfeiters' house is astonishing. It is a mysterious dwelling in which the southern light barely breaking through the narrow openings of the Venetian blinds, floats over the dusty air, covering the room and, in it, the face of the sleeping girl, with soft streaks of shadow. The lighting itself gives us a presentiment and we hardly need the Grand Guignol scene of the grimacing old counterfeiter brandishing his knife to make us understand that the prince will only touch the daughter at the cost of his life.

Foolish Wives is a kind of prelude to Stroheim's mature works: it contains at once promise and fulfilment.

NANOOK OF THE NORTH

U.S.A., 1922

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:
SCRIPT, DIRECTION AND
PHOTOGRAPHY:

Revillon Freres
Robert J. Flaherty

DOCUMENTARY in its modern form dates, as far as the Western world is concerned, from the appearance of *Nanook of the North*. (It is true, of course, that Dziga-Vertov, exponent of the 'kino-eye' theory, and his Left-Wing colleagues were independently launching another powerful realist movement in the Soviet Union, but this did not impinge on the West until after 1925.)

Documentary film-making is so familiar to us today that it is difficult to imagine the stir which *Nanook* created when it first appeared. In a 1923 survey of the best films of the preceding year, the critic (and later, dramatist), Robert E. Sherwood, wrote: "There are few surprises, few revolutionary changes . . . in the main, the best pictures were made by the stars and directors of established reputation. *Nanook of the North* was the one notable exception. It came from a hitherto unheard-of source, and it was entirely original in form," and on another point, he added: "There have been many fine travel pictures, many gorgeous 'scenics', but there has been only one that deserves to be called great. That one is *Nanook of the North*. It stands alone, literally in a class by itself. Indeed, no list of the best pictures, of this year, or of all the years in the brief history of the movies, could be considered complete without it."

Sherwood drew attention to two unusual features of the film; first, the fact that Flaherty, instead of making a dull impersonal travelogue, had presented his scenes through the adventures of one central character, Nanook; and secondly, that he had given dramatic excitement to the picture by showing Nanook in conflict against his natural adversary, the North, "Hitting back with its gales, its blizzards and its terrible, bitter cold". "Here was drama," he wrote. "Rendered far more vital than any trumped-up drama could ever be by the fact that it was all real. Nanook was no playboy, enacting a part which would be forgotten as soon as the greasepaint had been rubbed off; he was himself an Eskimo struggling to survive. The North was no mechanical affair of wind machines and paper snow; it was the North, cruel and incredibly strong."

The circumstances of making the film were no less dramatic than the film itself, as the following description by Flaherty reveals:

"The film *Nanook of the North* is a by-product—if I may use the term—of a long series of explorations in the north which I carried on on behalf of Sir William Mackenzie from 1910 to 1916. Much of the exploration was done with Eskimos. I have been on long journeys for months at a time with only two or three Eskimos as my companions. This experience gave me an insight into their lives and a deep regard for them.

"In 1913 I went north with a large outfit—an exploring ship with lumber and material for a wintering base and food for eight men for two years. A motion picture outfit was incorporated. I hoped that the results from it might help defray some of the costs of what were now beginning to be expensive explorations. I had no preliminary motion picture experience, other than some two weeks with a motion picture camera demonstrator just before leaving. We wintered in Baffin Land on this expedition, which was of a year and four months' duration, and during those intervals while I was not seriously engaged in exploratory work, a film was compiled of some of the Eskimos who lived with us. Naturally the results were indifferent. But as I was undertaking another expedition in another part of the north I secured more negative and chemicals, with the idea of building up this first film.

"On this expedition I wintered on the Belcher Islands, which I had rediscovered and explored. Again, between explorations as it were, I continued with the film work and added to the first film very materially. After a lot of hardship, which involved the loss of a launch and the wrecking of our cruising boat, we secured a remarkable film on a small island ninety miles out at sea, of walrus-hunting. This picture particularly, and some interesting stuff of native life, together with scenes showing the dismasting of the "Laddie", our exploring ship, which owing to our condition was broken up and used for fuel, formed the nucleus of what I hoped would be a good picture. After wintering a year on the islands, the "Laddie's" skipper, a Moose Factory half-breed, and myself, finally got out to civilization along with my notes, maps and the above-mentioned films.

"I had just completed editing the film in Toronto when, through gross carelessness of my own, the negative caught fire, and I was minus all (some thirty thousand feet of film). The editing print, however, was not burned, and this was shown to some private groups several times—just long enough, in fact, to enable me to realize that it was no good. I knew then that the reason I had missed out was that the whole thing was episodic. But I did see that if I were to take a single character and make him typify the Eskimos as I had known them so long and well, the results would be well worth while. To make a long story short, that is what happened. I went north again, this time solely to make a film. I took with me not only motion picture cameras, negative and developing outfit, but apparatus for producing electric light so that I could print and project my results as they were being made; thus I could correct the faults and

re-take wherever necessary, and more particularly still, my character and his family, who lived with me through the year could understand and appreciate what I was doing.

"Though Nanook and his crowd were at first highly amused at the idea of the white man wanting to take pictures of themselves, the most common objects in all the world, as soon as I got my projection apparatus going and showed them some of the first results, they were completely won over. As luck would have it, the first picture that was made was the walrus hunt, which many of the younger generation had never seen. I shall never forget the night it was first projected, on a white cotton sheet in my wintering hut. The audience—men, women, babes and children, squatted on the floor—completely forgot that what was unfolding before them on the sheet was a picture. They yelled, screamed and shouted their advice where the four stalwarts were shown in the walrus tug-of-war. In the language of the trade, that first picture was a knock-out. From that time on, they were with me to a man. Indeed, they vied with one another to be cased in the angerooka's big aggie (picture)."

After Flaherty had completed the picture he found considerable difficulty in getting distributors to accept. He took it to five different distributors. Finally, Pathe decided to give it a try at the Capitol Theatre, New York. It at once became a commercial success ("substantial if not sensational" Sherwood tells us,) and "was instantly hailed by every critic in New York."

Since then it has not only profoundly influenced the documentary movement, especially in Britain, but it started Flaherty on a professional film career, which included *Moana*, *Tabu*, *Man of Aran*, *Elephant Boy* and *Louisiana Story*.

Flaherty died on the 23rd July, 1951, at the age of 67.

THE COVERED WAGON

U.S.A., 1923

7 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Famous-Players-Lasky
DIRECTION:	James Cruze
SCRIPT:	Jack Cunningham, based on a novel by Emerson Hough
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Karl Brown
EDITING:	Dorothy Arzner

THE production of *The Covered Wagon* was described by James Cruze himself in an article published in "Film Daily" in 1924:

"It was largely a labor of love! It must have been or I don't see how everybody could have stuck it out through some of the experiences that fell to our lot in making *The Covered Wagon*. Of course, I mean by that that everyone was so heart and soul in every other way vitally interested that they never dreamed of kicking in the face of almost unendurable conditions at times. And right here I want to pay tribute to a lot of people who were the gamest, the most loyal, that any man would want to be surrounded by.

"Well, I'll try to sketch roughly some of the hard problems we had to contend with and which rendered the making of this picture different from any I ever before attempted and, I imagine, from anything anyone else ever attempted. To achieve absolute realism new locations had to be found. The necessity of using buffalo, having wide reaches of country, almost unpeopled; of getting away from anything that smacked of the motion picture, so to speak, made this imperative. So Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake was our first objective. There a herd of wild buffalo roams at will. In a great open space we built a camera stand like the prow of a ship with 8 × 8 timbers. Then the punchers herded the buffalo over the mountain and down past this stand. It took three days to get the bison to do this. They are contrary and insisted in splitting up in all directions. But at last the feat was accomplished. During these scenes several 'stunts' had to be performed—such as jumping from a horse to the back of a buffalo in wild flight. And this was done!

"We lived—there were only men on this trip—in a former cowshed—built in the days of Brigham Young. It was now a tool house. Cots were placed there, and facing a bitter wind from the Lake, which we tried vainly to exclude with canvas, we attempted to sleep. Mostly we turned and twisted and had nightmares. But we got through it all right and returned to Salt Lake after almost losing the equipment when a squall struck the lake and the none-too-secure boats almost capsized. We had chartered every craft on the lake as it was. From

here we travelled to Milford, Utah, where the rest of the company met us and then motored to camp, eighty-five miles away across two ranges of mountains and a couple of deserts. 'Motored!' That sounds so comfortable! Imagine the worst kind of mountain trip; then the worst kind of desert trip, with a few dry lakes and almost bridgeless arroyos thrown in for good measure and you get an idea of what this little jaunt meant. And we kept the road packed with autos all the time! One old chap, who had a lonely ranch en route, said he was thinking of moving because it was getting so 'cramped'. Eight trucks a day carried supplies to the two or three thousand people in camp. Indians were transported with bag and baggage. Hundreds of head of stock; all kinds of foodstuffs, lumber—anything and everything, to say nothing of fifty carloads of equipment from the Lasky (west coast) Studio. Came winds, blizzards, floods, heat, alkali dust—we had to work through it all. A great dam broke and the camp was all but inundated. We never stopped working. A heavy snow broke down tents and even the principal actors turned to and helped get 'em up again—that's what I mean by gameness and loyalty. The trails, the road to Milford were choked with snow. They broke a way through with loose horses and a steam roller. Food ran low—nobody kicked while waiting for the new supply to arrive. The only grumbling was when inclement weather made it absolutely impossible to work. All the wagons had to be made, rented or purchased—and the wagon train of prairie schooners was three miles in length. Fort Bridger had to be built—a tremendous set; they even bought barns and houses and wrecked them to get lumber for this work.

"The river fording was one of the hardest problems, and I admit I was happy when it had been done. The timbering of the wagon beds so that they would float was a tremendous job; then the cable arrangements to prevent possible loss of life if the wagon should get tangled and pulled under—it was a man's job all right—and the men who worked on it proved they were he-men, every one of them. The women were game, and the children—there were plenty of both in the big settler army. Exposure didn't seem to bring much sickness after all—there were no fatal illnesses—for which I am devoutly thankful. It was in every way pioneering in picture work—we blazed new trails all the time. It was no one man job. Credit is due to everyone concerned. And it was an experience that will never be forgotten—never."

During a revival of the film at the Museum of Modern Art recently, the following notes were recorded by Iris Barry:

"This glorified 'Western' is deservedly famous. Except for *Nanook of the North*, it was the first 'outdoor epic' of the screen. It stands in an important line of succession in the history of the cinema. Deriving from *The Birth of a Nation* as well as from the standard Western films, it and *The Birth of a Nation* alike are ancestors of the great Soviet films such as *Potemkin* and *Turksib*. On the other hand, *The Covered Wagon* and *Nanook* heralded as well the series of documentary pictures like *Grasse* and *Tabu*.

The Covered Wagon was made at a time when the American studios seemed

obsessed with pseudo-cosmopolitan and pseudo-American drawing-room and dance-hall nonsensicalities, and before the influence of the German post-war directors had revitalized them. Here appeared an honestly and typically American film in which a large impersonal theme superseded the usual narrowly human theme of amatory or financial success. Cruze had utilized the power of the screen to conjure up mass emotion as an instrument for propaganda in its best sense.

"In *The Covered Wagon*, many of the best functions of the cinema are combined. There is the element of actuality, such as occurs most commonly in topical or travel pictures, for real cattle swim a real river, mountains and skies and dust are authentic. There is also the ability of the cinema to reconstruct past as well as to mirror present life, for this glimpse of American pioneer endeavor as scrupulously resembles the real thing as possible. The film was made in carefully chosen natural locations, far from Hollywood and studios. The extra players who took part in it were non-professional actors, simple residents of Snake Valley, Nevada, where all but the final sequences were made. Quite remarkably, most of the professional actors also preserve this same spirit of authenticity: Ernest Torrence as Jackson, Tully Marshall as Bridger are wholeheartedly 'natural' and almost as free from staginess as players in Pudovkin's or Eisenstein's films. It is only the heroine and the hero who suggest the film studio or wear palpable make-up.

"The spurious romanticising element too common as a rule in our films creeps in only so long as the story dwells on the love-affair of this pair. Their presence must be regretted since, each time they obtrude, the story stands still, the technique is dulled and the interest of the spectator flags.

"The excellence of this picture was no accident. Emerson Hough's novel had captured much of the essence of pioneer tradition. In translating the novel into visual terms, Cruze had profited by the technical discoveries of D. W. Griffith, particularly as displayed in the cutting of the open-air sequences of *The Birth of a Nation*, made nine years before. Cruze himself had had considerable experience, at first as a director of serial films, in the making of which he undoubtedly acquired his peculiar skill in handling exterior shots and moving his characters easily in them.

"Photographically, *The Covered Wagon* is remarkable, for this was taken before the days of panchromatic stock. Especially rich are the night-scenes at the fort before the Indian attack, and the shots of the livestock and wagons crossing the river. In both, photographic brilliance is combined with considerable editorial skill—the shots are timed and assembled most excitingly. The music, so important a factor in enhancing the emotional content of silent films, was, of course, arranged specially. Though the theme-song has often been abused, in this case it seems legitimately introduced to add flavor and bind the whole epic of territorial expansion into shape."

GREED

U.S.A., 1923

10 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Goldwyn Pictures
DIRECTION:	Erich von Stroheim
SCRIPT:	Erich von Stroheim, based on the novel "McTeague", by Frank Norris
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Ben Reynolds and Billy Daniels
EDITING (RELEASE VERSION):	Rex Ingram and June Mathis
ART DIRECTION:	Cedric Gibbons

CAST

McTeague	..	..	..	..	..	Gibson Gowland
Trina Sieppe	..	..	..	..	..	.. Zasu Pitts
Marcus Schooler	..	..	..	..	..	.. Jean Hersholt
Zerkow	..	..	..	..	..	.. Cesare Gravina
Maria	..	..	..	..	..	.. Dale Fuller
Papa Sieppe	..	..	..	..	..	.. Chester Conklin
Mama Sieppe	..	..	..	..	..	.. Sylvia Ashton
Saddlemaster	..	..	..	..	..	.. Hughie Mack
McTeague's Mother	..	..	..	..	..	.. Tempe Piggott
Selina	..	..	..	..	..	.. Joan Standing
August	..	..	..	..	..	.. Austin Jewell
The Sieppe Twins	..	..	..	..	..	.. Oscar & Otto Gotell

"I CONSIDER that I have made only one real picture in my life," Stroheim remarked after *Greed*, adding that the producers had allowed only its remains to be seen. In the sense that *Greed* (1923) touches contemporary reality very closely, he was right; perhaps no American film has recreated the existing surface of one section of American life more unsparingly. But what Stroheim was trying to do in this film was not what those who call it "obvious" reproach it for—taking more than two hours to show that worship of Mammon is wicked—nor to indulge in realism for realism's sake. *Greed* is a new version of an old truth.

Its theme is not lust for money; the film is, rather, the dramatic casebook of a terrible human frustration and, finally, madness, which expresses itself in the actions and fantasies of a miser. More than that, it offers a judgment on the thwarted, inarticulate desires of wretched, poverty-stricken people. The motivation is, once again, sexual—the shy, virginal Trina marries the genial but brutish dentist McTeague, and a clumsy wedding night leaves her impregnably frigid and terrified. Her desires are twisted into one direction only, the acquisition of gold. She hoards a growing sack of money under her pillow, sleeping with the

precious coins instead of her husband, goes without food, exhausts herself with manual work, all for the sake of satisfying what is really a supreme act of denial, a sexual devotion to a non-sexual object. McTeague is too stupid, too innocent, to understand. He loses his practice because he has never qualified, and poverty degrades the couple horribly. At last in desperation he murders Trina, takes her gold; and flees in panic from San Francisco to the wastes of Death Valley. The last half-hour describes the pursuit of McTeague by a former suitor of Trina, the only member of a posse to catch up with him. Exhausted and bitter, the two men confront each other on the parched, flat sands; the mule carrying the only water-bottle runs off, and in firing at it they hit the bottle, the water streams out over the gold, and a few hours later, handcuffed together, they are dead from thirst and exposure under the burning sun.

Stroheim wrote his screenplay from Frank Norris' novel, "McTeague", again conceiving a work on an immense scale which was cut down by more than half for release, the only version extant today. A complete sub-plot is missing; the courtship of Trina by McTeague in the first part appears too sudden and hurried; and yet, with all these gaps, with the dislocation of the original structure, *Greed* survives powerfully as a whole. One is even tempted to wonder whether, in planning his story in two parts of between two and two and a half hours each, Stroheim did not miscalculate. The result might have been unendurable. The level of reality is so concentrated, so unremitting, that at the end of ten reels the spectator is practically exhausted. At the same time, the drama gains from this newly-imposed concentration, and to disperse it would almost certainly be to weaken its impact. One thing Stroheim failed to learn from Griffith was the dynamic power of editing.

The realism of *Greed* is not exterior, but assimilated, an outward projection of the characters and the drama. One dreads the peeling wallpapers, the unmade bed with its dirty linen, the piles of unwashed dishes, the ragged bandages on Trina's fingers after McTeague has bitten them in an attempt to force money out of her, the whole hideousness and squalor of the San Francisco apartment, not in themselves but for the revelation of human debasement. At times this kind of detail rises to an intense symbolic crystallisation of a scene—the train roaring by when McTeague and Trina embrace in the station yard, the funeral procession glimpsed through the window during the wedding reception, the coffin beyond the baked meats, and the marvellous succession of closing shots, with the sun beating down on two bodies together on the cracked earth, the dead mule, the caged bird that has been given its freedom and is unable to fly, the spilled and useless gold, all left to the anonymity of the desert valley.

The imagery has a sombre consistency. All the action (none of it shot in a studio), apart from a short bleak prologue showing McTeague working in a Californian goldmine, a labourer taking correspondence courses on dentistry, takes place either in the suburbs of a San Francisco in the throes of grimy industrial growth, or in the dry, bare landscapes of Death Valley. The effect is so hypnotic that hardly anybody has noticed, as Rodney Ackland has pointed

out, that in the location scenes in San Francisco itself the passers-by are wearing the clothes of the 1920's, whereas the actors are costumed in a style two decades earlier. This is, perhaps, the one example of a lapse in Stroheim's monumental care for detail.

The social verdict is inflexible. The end of the film leaves one with an appalling sense of human waste, of futility, of the drabness and cruelty of lives stifled by ignorant poverty. Every character in the film is overwhelmed by it. Nothing is left but the folly of ambitions that never had even the vestiges of grandeur. One begins by pitying Trina, but she, too, becomes finally contemptible, and about the simple loutish McTeague one can only feel he is unlucky. With an ordinary wife he would have lived contentedly, if hideously. Stroheim's protagonists have in fact the possibility of choice—Trina, as well as McTeague, of an understanding lover—but it is too theoretical to be at all vivid. Perhaps the absence of any mitigation in this chronicle of wretchedness suggests the Viennese aristocrat—an American director would not have refused personal concern to such a degree. If he had not excited pity for Trina and McTeague he would at least have made an angrier film. Stroheim has scrutinised their lives with a merciless, unflinching eye, but there is no ambivalence in his approach, as there is with *The Wedding March*. Yet, though in a sense this limits the achievement, one cannot altogether reproach him for it. A more personal involvement would probably have lost the singleness of purpose, which needed an unyielding ruthlessness to carry it through and make it the piece of sustained, grim realistic analysis that was to create such a lasting impact on the American cinema.

SAFETY LAST

U.S.A., 1923

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Hal Roach, Associates
DIRECTION:	Fred Newmayer and Sam Taylor
SCRIPT:	Harold Lloyd and Hal Roach
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Walter London
EDITING:	Fred L. Guiol

CAST ·

The Boy	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Harold Lloyd</i>
The Girl	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Mildred Davies</i>
The Pal ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Bill Strothers</i>
The Law	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Noah Young</i>
The Floorwalker	..	..	..	..	..	<i>W. B. Clarke</i>

Safety Last is probably the best of Harold Lloyd's films, and certainly one of his most popular. When it was finished in 1923, Harold Lloyd was thirty years old and already at the peak of his career. Although he continued to make thrill comedies until *Professor Beware* in 1938, his best-known work was done before 1926 with such films as *Grandma's Boy*, *Why Worry* and *The Freshman*.

Born in Nebraska, Lloyd came from a middle-class business family and learned acting at night school while earning his living. He joined a touring company as stage manager and later, to act. When, in 1911, the Lloyd family moved to San Diego, Harold found himself tempted to try his luck in Hollywood and by 1912 he was playing small parts as an extra for Universal.

It was there that he met Hal Roach, and in 1913, when Roach inherited a comparatively large sum of money, they decided to found their own independent production company. Their immediate aim was to make "gag" pictures—comedies mainly for children, and Lloyd began to experiment with make-up and characteristics to create a comedy figure for himself. The first character that emerged was called "Willie Work", distinguished by a padded coat, battered silk hat and cat's whisker moustache. But the lack of technical skill and experience of both Roach and Lloyd made these early two-reelers unsuccessful financially, and when Roach signed a well-known star, Dick Ross, at double Lloyd's salary, the two parted and the comedian was once more free-lancing. During the next months he worked, often as stunt man, for Keystone, and acted with several of the well-known comedians of the day, such as Ford Sterling, Fatty Arbuckle and Ben Turpin.

But in the following year he returned to Roach with a salary increase of 100 per cent and for the next five years they made together, at first one comedy

a week, and then a two-reel comedy a fortnight. "Willie Work" changed to "Lonesome Luke" with tight coat, large shoes, smaller moustache and tiny battered hat. Gestures and characteristics developed much in the line of the Charlie Chaplin character and the imitation was recognised by audiences.

Then in 1917, when he felt he had exhausted the comedy gags for Luke, he put on for the first time the horn-rimmed glasses, and these brought him instant success.

Leaving Roach once more, he found he could earn \$300 a week with Pathe, but again returned to the Roach company the following year, and by 1919 was working as "Harold Lloyd" on the character with horn-rimmed glasses.

It was not, however, until 1921, when he was once more separated from Roach and being directed by Fred Newmayer, that the idea of a thrill picture was formed. In his autobiography Lloyd explains that in his search for more varied gadgets, these became increasingly daring, until in *Safety Last*, the gadget became a skyscraper. Moreover, by 1922 (*Grandma's Boy*) he was beginning to feel the demand for longer comedies and this meant, as it did for other comedians, the end of slapstick and custard pie styles as well as of "gadget" shorts; the development of the story, even in comedies, meant also for Lloyd the end of stunts without a story or motive. Thus, by 1923, in *Safety Last* he is forced to climb the skyscraper for a definite reason—because he has promised in return for \$1,000 to have someone on the spot at the appointed time to climb it.

Safety Last, which Lloyd had planned in a previous picture called *Look Out Below*, and which co-starred his wife, Mildred Davies, was his first real thrill film. Dependent on height for its effects, the climax of the film is the skyscraper episode; the whole story builds up from the beginning to that climax, and the film ends abruptly as soon as the episode is over. "At no time (during the making of the picture) could I have fallen more than three stories", explains Lloyd in "An American Comedy". He goes on to say that the film's effects were achieved almost exclusively by cheating on camera angles, and not, as one would suppose, by double exposure technique. Lloyd himself was throughout his own stunt man, and the story idea was also his.

Lloyd's fame like Chaplin's seems to be completely timeless and universal. Though the fashion for Lloyd's thrill pictures began to wane, he continued to make films—his most recent being *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock* (1946) directed by Preston Sturges, when Lloyd was 53; but by 1938 he was concentrating largely on producing, rather than acting in, films.

Harold Lloyd as a comic figure is mainly distinguished by his impassive countenance, his young ingenuousness and his superficial nature, interested only in success—the need for which dominates his life—and in the love of "the girl next door". It is her naïve faith in his ability to win social and financial success that justifies all the absurdities in *Safety Last*.

In contrast therefore to Chaplin's figure of "Charlie", changing and revealing always new gestures and feeling, Harold remains constantly the same, with

no penetrating characterisation to offset the superficiality of his feelings and motives. His feelings are always transparent and the jokes he plays are always elaborately prepared for, so that there is little surprise in the denouement; as, for example, when he enlists Bill to play a practical joke on the policeman whom he believes to be a friend of his.

The Lloyd films tend to be slow, dependent on gags and thrills for effect, and to some that effect may often seem more horrifying than funny. Harold seems to travel through his films on a wave of optimism which, however impossible, is yet fully and continuously justified. Perhaps he symbolises the young pugnacious American college boy—ingenious, heedless, sentimental and bubbling with energy. But above all, he represents the twentieth-century youth in eternal conflict with the scientific inventions of his age.

THE NAVIGATOR

U.S.A., 1924

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
 DIRECTION: Buster Keaton, Donald Crisp and
 Jean C. Havez
 SCRIPT: Joseph A. Mitchell and Clyde Bruckman

CAST

The Young Millionaire	..	..	..	..	<i>Buster Keaton</i>
The Young Millionairess	..	..	..	..	<i>Kathryn Maguire</i>
The Father	..	..	..	..	<i>Frederick Vroom</i>
Native Chief	..	..	..	..	<i>Noble Johnson</i>

JOSEPH FRANCIS KEATON was born in Pickway, Kansas, in 1896 to parents who, under the name "The Two Keatons", toured the country with a rough knockabout vaudeville turn. From early childhood he was trained by his father in the art of taking falls and at 3½ joined his parents' team; the speciality of the new act, now "The Three Keatons", was to 'bounce' the small boy about the stage, to hurl him against scenery or into the orchestra pit. The story goes that the name "Buster" comes from a family friend (Harry Houdini, "the handcuff king") who, when visiting the Keatons, was amazed to see the boy fall down a flight of stairs and emerge unhurt.

Buster's father is said to have taught his son never to betray any emotion on stage—smiling or laughing in view of the audience was especially taboo—and thereby trained him to wear the imperturbably stoic mask with which he has faced the world ever since (only once did he smile in one of his films, but so effectively did this kill the joke that he has never tried it again). Keaton toured America and Europe with his parents and appeared at one time in a London music-hall on the same bill as Harry Lauder and Sarah Bernhardt—the latter, according to Keaton's autobiography, "How I Broke Into Movies", was greatly shocked at Keaton, Snr., for making money out of throwing his son about the stage.

In 1917, Keaton joined Mack Sennett's Keystone team at a weekly salary of 40 dollars and acted for a time as stooge for Roscoe ("Fatty") Arbuckle. Their first film, *The Butcher Boy*, has unfortunately not survived. A couple of years later he joined First National Pictures, for whom he made a series of two-reel comedies that brought him fame. In 1921, Keaton married Natalie, the second of the three Talmadge sisters and with her and Joseph Schenk (at that time Norma Talmadge's husband) formed his own company to make films for

First National. Keaton's first full-length comedy, *The Three Ages* (1923), was made for M.G.M. and followed by some of his best-known films—*Our Hospitality*, *The Navigator*, *Sherlock Jnr.*, *Steamboat Bill, Jnr.*, *The Cameraman*, all written and directed (or co-directed) by Keaton himself. It has been estimated that in the mid-'20's a Keaton feature for M.G.M. used to cost about 200,000 dollars and reliably earned 2,000,000. In the late '20's Keaton left M.G.M. to make a couple of films for United Artists (*The General* is one of them), but subsequently returned and has been associated with M.G.M. in one way or another since. He now has an arrangement under which he invents and stages comic business for Red Skelton.

Up to 1935 Keaton made several films with Jimmy Durante, Wallace Beery and Robert Montgomery and later appeared in shorts in Hollywood, France and Mexico. A year ago he visited the Chiswick Empire with his wife in a silent sketch and he could be seen, just before Christmas last year, clowning in a Paris cinema. Buster Keaton was seen briefly in *Sunset Boulevard* and, most recently, made a memorable appearance in *Limelight*.

The following note was prepared by the Museum of Modern Art in New York:

"In contrast to the character that Lloyd created, Keaton would resemble the classic simpleton of legend and fairy story were it not for a quality in him which might be described as metaphysical madness. As the art historian Erwin Panofsky has pointed out, he is imperturbably serious, inscrutable and stubborn, and acts under the impulse of an irresistible power comparable only to the mysterious urge that causes birds to migrate or avalanches to come crashing down. That this impulse is generally focused on a girl (of no particular attractions) matters as little as the fact that Don Quixote performs his exploits for the sake of Dulcinea: it is not by accident that the only kiss in *The Navigator* is applied to the thick glass shield of a diver's helmet. Thus Keaton moves in the mechanised world of today like the inhabitant of another planet. He gazes with frozen bewilderment at a nightmare reality. Inventions and contrivances like deck-chairs and railroad engines seem insuperably animate to him, in the same measure as human beings become impersonal. Without friends or relatives, he is generally incapable of associating with his fellow-beings on a 'human' basis, but mechanical devices, though often inimical to him, are, on the other hand, the only 'beings' which can 'understand' him. They are the real 'co-stars' in his films (the big liner in *The Navigator*, a pre-historic railroad engine in *The General*), and while they often introduce an element of confusion or positive terror, as in the scene where a self-started gramophone plays 'Sailor, beware', or in the macabre opening of the twenty doors of twenty uninhabited staterooms, there is, on the other hand, the unforgettable moment when Keaton, by a tender tap, expresses his gratitude to a little cannon which, in the very nick of time, has decided to kill his enemy. He always wins in the end; not, like Chaplin, by romantically escaping from the world of machinery into a realm of human freedom, but, on the contrary, by fatalistically throwing his humanity into the

whirlpool of mechanical forces. He is a hero by the grace of Un-reason and Un-feelingness, and in this respect a very modern hero indeed. The 'plot' of *The Navigator* is particularly amusing in that it restates the problem of *Robinson Crusoe* with an inverted sign, so to speak; where Robinson Crusoe, on a deserted island, has to create the rudiments of civilisation, Keaton, finding himself and his girl marooned in an over-technicalised environment, has to create the rudiments of natural existence: Robinson Crusoe cannot boil an egg because he has neither fire nor kettle—Keaton cannot boil an egg because the available apparatus is only fit for boiling three hundred."

STRIKE

(STACHKA)

U.S.S.R., 1924

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: 1st Goskino
 DIRECTION: Sergei M. Eisenstein
 SCRIPT: The Proletkult Collective
 (Valeri F. Pletnirov, S. M. Eisenstein,
 I. Kravchinovski, etc.)
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Eduard Tissé
 ASSISTANT DIRECTION: G. Alexandrov
 I. Kravchinovski
 A. Levshin
 ASSISTANT CAMERAMEN: V. Popov, V. Khvatov
 ART DIRECTION: Vasili Rakhals

CAST

The Spy	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Maxim Shtraukh</i>
Fireman . .	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Grigori Alexandrov</i>
Workman	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Mikhail Gornorov</i>
Chief of Security Police	..	..	..	..	..	<i>I. Ivanov</i>
Militant Worker	..	..	..	..	..	<i>I. Klukvin</i>
Organiser	..	..	..	..	..	<i>A. Antonov</i>
						and
<i>Judith Glizer</i>			<i>A. Kuznetsov</i>			<i>V. Yanukova</i>
		<i>V. Uralski</i>		<i>M. Mamin</i>		

THE three greatest artist-innovators in world cinema remain Griffith, Chaplin and Eisenstein. Griffith created the cinema's alphabet, Chaplin its humanity, individual and particular, and Eisenstein its intellect. Though Griffith and Chaplin generally succeeded in a naked appeal to the emotions, any attempt on their part to appeal primarily to the intelligence seemed only to antagonise the majority of their audience. *Intolerance* struck many as obtuse and exhausting; while Chaplin himself neither liked nor repeated the delirious, utterly cinematic surrealism of *One A.M.* Both men, however, had won many battles against commercial pressures; and when Eisenstein entered films in 1924, at a time when Chaplin was well established and Griffith was allegedly in decline, he acknowledged his graduation from their experience, established his own intellectual approach to film-making, and himself battled throughout the next twenty-four years against the conventions of both the Soviet and the capitalist cinema.

Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein was born on January 23rd, 1898, in Riga, Latvia. Except when it suited them, he was neglected by his parents—his extro-

vert father, a Christianised Jew, one of the city engineers; and his self-centred mother, a Russian lady of some wealth. In childhood he transferred his affections to his peasant nurse, and in adolescence his interests, unguided, groped towards the arts. He studied architecture in Petrograd, haunted the circus and music-hall, and took Leonardo da Vinci as his patron saint. An enthusiastic convert to the revolution, he joined the Red Army, survived much harsh and brutal experience, eventually finding himself, penniless, in Moscow. Stumbling on a new career as scene painter with the Proletkult Theatre, he worked exuberantly through four years of appalling hardship, developing his talent for design and direction, until he persuaded his employers to make their next production, *Strike*, as a film.

Strike had a gratifying success in France and Germany, found little distribution in Russia and (until very recently) none in Britain or America. Eisenstein's world-wide reputation was made with his second film, *Potemkin*, and consolidated by the appearance of *October* and *The General Line*—though these were subsequently withdrawn in Russia as one wave of ideology succeeded another. All four of these silent films remain, in one way or another, unparalleled achievements, penetrating, vigorous, and uniquely cinematic, their movement functioning from a vital, architectural basis of composition, and providing that dynamic sweep and forcefulness which had previously remained the secret of Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*.

Controversy, triumph, betrayal and opposition followed Eisenstein throughout his career in sound cinema. Disappointed by Hollywood, finding peace in Mexico, overstaying his leave of absence, falling foul of his backers, and returning home to Moscow in economic disgrace—the results of his naïve crusade abroad finally arrived in Moscow fourteen years later, shaped into two films, *Thunder Over Mexico* and *Time in the Sun*.

During these fourteen years Eisenstein supported himself by teaching at the Institute of Cinematography, and by making four films, of which he was allowed to complete two. *Bezhin Meadow* (1935–37) was condemned for its formalism and its political and sociological inadequacy, and never shown publicly. *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) fulfilled current Party ideology in being intensely nationalistic and anti-German, but in less than a year was withdrawn while Eisenstein complied with another policy upheaval by directing *The Valkyrie* at the Bolshoi Theatre.

By autumn of 1941 *Nevsky* was revived, *The Valkyrie* withdrawn, and Eisenstein was at work on *Ivan the Terrible*. His dominant artistic position in Mosfilm was held until the completion of *Ivan the Terrible, Part Two*, when he was censured for "preoccupation with court intrigues and for neglecting the national aspects of Ivan's reign". But his intensely individualistic approach proved incapable of revision; his heart gave way under the strain; and Eisenstein died on February 10th, 1948, at the age of fifty.

At the time of *Strike*, his first film, Eisenstein was a director of the Proletkult Theatre, an organisation with a boldly original technique of acting and

presentation which led him logically to the medium of the cinema. Of formal plot, *Strike* has very little in the conventional sense. A characteristic brilliance of wit and image association here achieves an almost surrealist intensity. The acting, in Proletkult style, is an explosive blend of realism with grotesque and acrobatic stylisation. The photography often achieves effects reminiscent of the "metaphysical objects" school of painting. Not all these violent and original elements blend harmoniously, and later Eisenstein considered that *Strike* "floundered about in the flotsam of a rank theatricality that had become alien to it". But many sequences are organised in ways still so original and persuasive that all its lessons are still far from being learned. Above all, there is the abiding fascination of watching the young Eisenstein at work, like a master chemist, among the pure elements of film expression.

THIEF OF BAGDAD

U.S.A., 1924

11 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Fairbanks-United Artists
 DIRECTION: Raoul Walsh
 SCRIPT: Lotta Woods
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Arthur Edison
 ART DIRECTION: William Cameron Menzies

CAST

The Thief of Bagdad	..	..	..	..	<i>Douglas Fairbanks</i>
His Evil Associate	..	..	..	..	<i>Snitz Edwards</i>
The Evil Man	..	..	..	..	<i>Charles Belcher</i>
The Princess	..	..	..	..	<i>Julanne Johnston</i>
The Mongol Slave	..	..	..	..	<i>Anna May Wong</i>
The Slave of the Lute	..	..	..	..	<i>Winter-Blossom</i>
The Caliph	..	..	..	..	<i>Brandon Hurst</i>
His Soothsayer	..	..	..	..	<i>Toto du Crow</i>
The Mongol Prince	..	..	..	..	<i>So-Jin</i>
His Counsellor	..	..	..	..	<i>K. Nambu</i>
His Court Magician	..	..	..	..	<i>Sadakichi Hartman</i>
The Indian Prince	..	..	..	..	<i>Noble Johnson</i>
The Persian Prince	..	..	..	..	<i>Mathilde Comont</i>
His Awaker	..	..	..	..	<i>Charles Stevens</i>
The Sworder	..	..	..	..	<i>Sam Baker</i>

EARLY in the 1920's, German Historical films (*Passion*, *Anne Boleyn*) greatly impressed movie fans and movie producers alike with their lavishness of scene and production. Douglas Fairbanks, by now the best-paid star but two (his wife, Mary Pickford, and Chaplin), was casting around for a challenge to his business acumen, now established by the success of *Robin Hood*, and found it to hand in the threat of the German films. He meant *The Thief of Bagdad* to dwarf both his own past and the German present. In the huge Pickford-Fairbanks studio, he outdid the Germans to the extent of creating a dream picture unrelated to any known reality. And it seemed he had outdone them in spectacle and trick illusion, which many people in 1924 thought were the best novelty the movies had to offer. A second generation of moviegoers, then growing into adolescence, enjoyed the new thrill of seeing fairy tales set in motion. The Fairbanks of *The Thief* became their Fairbanks for keeps, for they were too young to have known his earlier incarnation—the all-American bank clerk. *The Thief* was, and is, a sort of juvenile epic. But somehow, for the wider and older audience, it did not register. A world public that knew and loved the pattern of

Fairbanks' heroics was impatient of overlong romantic and processional pauses in between the gymnastics. The box-office told a story that Fairbanks was too good a business man to ignore: *Robin Hood*, made for \$700,000, grossed much more than *The Thief*, made at the then unprecedented cost of two million dollars.

After *The Thief*, Fairbanks returned to his earlier style, of which *The Black Pirate* is by far the best example. New feats of daring, combined with the warm mellow tones of this finest achievement of early Technicolor, gave the picture a peculiar and memorable charm.

A few years later, Fairbanks accomplished the difficult transition to the talkies by appearing with Miss Pickford in *The Taming of the Shrew*, and in 1932 concluded his American career with *Mr. Robinson Crusoe*, a final salute to the natural life. In 1934, he went to England and made for Alexander Korda what was to be his last picture, *The Private Life of Don Juan*.

Fairbanks was of a piece from his first to his last American film. Like most other great entertainers, he did one thing superbly and all the time. It consisted in a range of gestures of the whole body, exquisitely co-ordinated (he is the only film star to relegate the professional athletic stand-in to the status of a competing amateur). The sight of this in motion, whatever the plot was saying, is a kind of spiritual grace. And it is as surely an indigenous gift of the movies as the flying feet of Fred Astaire, or Disney, or the skimming shore bird of *Song of Ceylon*.

The following note is from an article by Alistair Cooke, entitled "Douglas Fairbanks: the Making of a Screen Character":

"After the success of *The Three Musketeers*, it seemed clear that costume fantasy was what people wanted most, at least from Douglas Fairbanks. This encouragement was very gratifying to a Fairbanks who had become a remarkable impresario. His studio was still a place to frolic in, but armies of workmen moved there, huge sets were built (*Robin Hood*, *The Thief of Bagdad*). By an act of bravado worthy of 'Doug', Fairbanks had made a gesture to solve Hollywood's chronic unemployment problem of 1921-22 and given orders for the largest interior ever to be built in the history of the movies, the biggest cast (*Robin Hood*). Soon through these halls went Leloir, the French costume expert; Carl Oscar Berg, the Swedish artist; Dwight Franklin, the authority on buccaneer life; Robert Nicols, the poet. Soon there were conferences of engineers, painters, chemists, men stringing a hundred and twenty piano wires to suspend the swimmers of *The Black Pirate* from a crane. There was always throughout the 'twenties a small army of technical experts on the various periods relived in the Fairbanks fantasies; construction crews, painters, odd craftsmen were brought from every corner of Europe.

"During this period, Fairbanks himself was primarily a pioneer producer, absorbed in methods of producing costume film, crowd pictures, color film. The character of 'Doug' was stripped down to the romantic essentials. Dressed in a cloak and a rapier and set in motion with a rather more theatrical swagger, Fairbanks' stage training never counted much until the period of the costume films, when he relied too often on an acting style that a younger 'Doug' had once

lightly tossed out of the movies. But the stress was increasingly on Fairbanks the producer.

"He was an extremely shrewd business man, and there was nothing naïve about the grandiosity of his production ambitions. Allene Talmey has very effectively disposed of the pleasant fallacy that Fairbanks was a cheerful athlete with no head for money. And Frank Case notes that 'Douglas could break up a meeting of directors . . . by disappearing up a fire escape . . . but when the final decision was about to be made it would be his voice and his opinion that decided the verdict'."

BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN

U.S.S.R., 1925

5 reels

PRODUCTION:	1st Goskino
DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION:	Jacob Bliokh
DIRECTION AND EDITING:	Sergei M. Eisenstein
STORY AND FIRST TREATMENT:	N. Agadjanovoi
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Eduard Tissé
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:	Grigori Alexandrov
ASSISTANTS	A. Antonov, M. Gomorov, M. Shtraukh, A. Levshin
CAMERA ASSISTANT:	V. Popov
ART DIRECTOR:	Vasili Rakhals

CAST

The Sailor Vakulinchuk	..	..	..	..	..	<i>A. Antonov</i>
Captain Golikov	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Vladimir Barski</i>
Lieutenant Giliarovski	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Grigori Alexandrov</i>
Woman on the steps	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Repnikova</i>
Officer ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Marusov</i>
Recruit ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>I. Bobrov</i>
						<i>A. Fait</i>

and

Sailors of the Red Navy
Citizens of Odessa
Members of the Proletkult Theatre

TOGETHER with *Birth of a Nation* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Potemkin* is one of the most important films in the history of the silent cinema. It is regarded by many as the greatest work that Eisenstein produced, and at the same time the best illustration of the technique perfected in the silent Russian films. On this technique Eisenstein has developed a theory of aesthetics of the film which he has outlined in numerous articles and in his books "The Film Sense" and "Film Form". He argued that the film as an art consists in the art of editing, in the rhythm established by joining together moving images of differing lengths, and differing subject content. Believing with Kuleshov—the leading theorist of the left-wing film directors of the revolutionary period—that in every art there exists firstly the material, and secondly a method of composing that material, Eisenstein was (in his silent films at least) primarily concerned with the second of these considerations. He recognised fully the value of the well-known experiment that Kuleshov made with the actor Mosjoukine, when he joined a shot of the actor showing him with his mouth open, together with a

shot of a plate of soup, then with a coffin and finally with a scene showing a little girl. The effect of each of these shots intercut with that of the actor's face—which in actual fact remained the same—was to show him hungry in the first, unhappy in the second and laughing in the third. Seeing the extraordinary power of suggestion that the film possessed, Eisenstein carried on with these experiments. Influenced by his study of engineering and architecture, and his experience in the contemporary Russian theatre of Meyerhold, he began seriously to turn from the theatre to film production, and after his first film, *Strike* (1924), produced *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) from his own original script.

Made in three months and planned originally as part of a much bigger film, the story is based on a true incident which occurred on the Russian battleship "Prince Potemkin" during the revolution of 1905, and uses no professional actors, but the sailors themselves.

Writing of the Russian cinema, Lejeune has said: "It is part of a carefully planned educational campaign, pointed to the one definite end of social co-operation." This new social consciousness among the Russian peoples after the successful anti-Czarist revolution of 1917 was an ideal incentive to the representational arts. Both the theatre and the cinema developed artistically far in advance of Western Europe during the 'twenties. Though writing within the limitations of a clearly defined and totalitarian ideology, the young artists of the revolution found everywhere ample material for dramatic presentation. The mere fact of a successful revolution and the beginning of a new social order was sufficient to inspire them. *Potemkin* is one of the earliest products in the cinema of this enthusiasm for an ideal, and it is obvious from the film that this ideal inspired Eisenstein with the rest. The high intensity of feeling for the sailors when, for example, some of them are about to be shot on deck is fully communicated to the audience. His subject, in fact, in *Potemkin* is the human mass. No individual stands out from the crowd either of the sailors or of the people of Odessa. Individual human characters are never portrayed. The film is created solely by Eisenstein himself and not by the emergence of any individual personalities. His selection of images, particularly during the famous Odessa Steps sequence (which was not incidentally in the original script but inserted after Eisenstein had visited Odessa) is carefully planned and wholly pre-determined. The people, though often seen in close shot, are images and symbols, as for example the mother with her dead child, just as much as the steps, the rhythmic march of the soldiers and the recurring shots of the pram are symbols. Eisenstein is not interested, in *Potemkin*, in people, their emotions and their characters. His hero is the revolution and the fact of that revolution he has chosen to embody in the support given by a whole town to a few revolutionary sailors. It is his conviction, his burning belief in their revolution that he has infused into the film, and it is this strong emotion of Eisenstein's that makes the film a work of art and not—as his later ones were to be—a striving for the perfection of his technique.

The film was banned in England, together with other Russian films of the

time, but was shown in 1929 by the Film Society in London. That showing also included the first exhibition of *Drifters*, and it is interesting to note the strong influence which Eisenstein's work, and *Battleship Potemkin* in particular, exercised on Grierson.

THE LAST LAUGH

(DER LETZTE MANN)

Germany, 1925

7 reels

PRODUCTION: Erich Pommer for Ufa
 DIRECTION: F. W. Murnau
 SCRIPT: Carl Mayer
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Karl Freund
 ART DIRECTION: Walther Roehrig, Robert Herlth

CAST

The Porter	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Emil Jannings</i>
His Daughter	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Mady Delschaft</i>
Her Fiance	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Max Hiller</i>
His Aunt	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Emile Kurz</i>
Hotel Manager	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Hans Unterkirchen</i>
A Young Guest	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Olaf Storm</i>
A Corpulent Guest	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Hermann Valentin</i>
A Thin Neighbour	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Emma Wyda</i>
A Night Watchman	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Georg John</i>

The Last Laugh has long been acknowledged as one of the most important and influential of German silent films. Together with Dupont's *Vaudeville*, made in the following year, it was recognised as breaking new ground in the art of screen narration. It was particularly praised for its use of camera movement and the absence of sub-titles. "It was the German camera work (in the fullest sense of that term)", Miss Iris Barry has since written, "which most deeply impressed Hollywood", and it was even claimed (untruly) that the film told its story almost without a cut.

The camera work, however, although important, was only one aspect of the whole, and a full analysis of the film must take account of other elements as well. Three figures had a primary creative responsibility for *The Last Laugh*—the director, F. W. Murnau: the script writer, Carl Mayer: and the cameraman, Karl Freund; and the most important of the three was undoubtedly Carl Mayer. With the production of his first script for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (written jointly with Hans Janowitz), Mayer became fascinated with the possibilities of this new medium, and for the rest of his working life he devoted himself single-mindedly to the development of a technique of film-writing.

In his book, "From Caligari to Hitler", Siegfried Kracauer has analysed in some detail the family resemblances between *Hintertreppe* (1921), *Shattered* (1921), *New Year's Eve* (1924) and *The Last Laugh*—all made from Mayer's

scripts. In all these films, Mayer seems to have been preoccupied with the same problem of content; Kracauer calls them instinct films (emphasising "the surge of disorderly lusts and impulses in a chaotic world") as opposed to the earlier tyrant films (*Nosferatu*, *Vanina*, *Dr. Mabuse* and *Waxworks*). In them, too, he is preoccupied with the same problem of style, for the style is a reflection of the content. His concern to abandon a literary approach as far as possible, to create in terms of a flow of images, led him automatically to dispense with subtitles and to use camera movement; these things were an integral part of his technique, a technique resembling nothing so much, perhaps, as the mechanism of the dream used to express conscious ideas. For the same reason he was led to work out his stories in terms of primitive instincts, passions and emotions; his characters (like those of Griffith) were given type names.

All Mayer's films of this period were tragedies, in the sense that they are weighed down with pessimism and suffering, and end unhappily. (The "happy" ending to *The Last Laugh* is hardly an exception, for the complete absence of any motivation to link it to the first part of the film is so forced that it can be nothing else but a jibe at the expense of the typical American ending to reinforce, rather than alleviate, the gloom of the main story.) They are hardly tragedies in the classical sense, however, since the characters are defeated by circumstance rather than by any defect of their own natures, and they make no struggle to oppose their fate, but succumb in a sea of self-pity which is somewhat distasteful to watch. Again, the implications of all this are fully analysed in Kracauer's book, to which the serious student is referred.

After *The Last Laugh*, Mayer scripted *Tartuffe* (1925), *Berlin* (1926), *Sunrise* (1927), *At the Edge of the World* (1927) and (in Britain) *The Fourth Estate* (1939). He died in London on July 1st, 1944.

METROPOLIS

Germany, 1926

10 reels

PRODUCTION: UFA
 DIRECTION: Fritz Lang
 SCRIPT: Fritz Lang and Thea von Harbou,
 from the novel by Thea von Harbou
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Karl Freund and Gunther Rittau
 ART DIRECTION: Otto Hunte, Erich Kettelburt,
 Karl Vollbrecht
 SCULPTURE: Walter Schultze-Mittendorf

CAST

John Frederson	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Alfred Abel</i>
His son	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Gustav Froehlich</i>
Rotwang, the inventor	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Rudolf Klein-Rogge</i>
Maria	}	..	..	..	..	<i>Brigitte Helm</i>
The Robot						
The Works Foreman	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Heinrich George</i>

Metropolis, the most maligned classic of the German cinema—Kracauer's now famous analysis of its social significance is given below—is a film which, despite its absurdities as a political document, its ludicrous falsification of important economic issues, its rather naïve 'scientifiction' invention, remains a cinematic achievement whose appeal it is difficult to deny. The now standard Shuftan process—a trick effect which through the use of mirrors allows the substitution of small models for giant structures—was used in the film to create marvellous effects of outlandish future architecture and gives the film a visual virtuosity which remains to this day extremely impressive. Fritz Lang's interest in the paraphernalia of his science-governed city, marvellous though its results, does continually distract from the essential conflicts of the story: the superbly realised sequence in which the evil scientist creates his robot has a bizarre quality which the current science fiction films have never equalled, but it is legitimate to ask how important in the film's context—it has, after all, a very serious theme—it is to show all the glamorous electronic devices and to let the audience marvel at the big sparks, while the main issues are being fought out between capital and labour.

This child-like insistence on Lang's part in having fun with huge scientific gadgets remains the film's main source of appeal: *Metropolis* is perhaps the most rewarding "architectural" film among the works of the school of German film-makers who were very conscious of set design. That its human qualities are

almost non-existent—the chief character, the industrialist's son, is a hopeless hodge-podge of idealism and muddle-headedness, reacting to every situation as the script demands without any semblance of consistency in characterisation—is undeniable and has to be accepted: *Metropolis* is, really, a charade which provides opportunities for some exciting visual effects. One quite sympathises with H. G. Wells's comment that it is "quite the silliest film" but this does not destroy its interest as a piece of cinematic staging.

Siegfried Kracauer's penetrating analysis of the film reads, in part, as follows:

"In *Metropolis*, the paralysed collective mind seemed to be talking with unusual clarity in its sleep. This is more than a metaphor: owing to a fortunate combination of receptivity and confusion, Lang's script writer, Thea von Harbou, was not only sensitive to all undercurrents of the time, but indiscriminately passed on whatever happened to haunt her imagination. *Metropolis* was rich in subterranean content that, like contraband, had crossed the borders of consciousness without being questioned.

"Freder, son of the mammoth industrialist who controls the whole of Metropolis, is true to type: he rebels against his father and joins the workers in the lower city. There he immediately becomes a devotee of Maria, the great comforter of the oppressed. A saint rather than a socialist agitator, this young girl delivers a speech to the workers in which she declares that they can be redeemed only if the heart mediates between hand and brain. And she exhorts her listeners to be patient: soon the mediator will come. The industrialist, having secretly attended this meeting, deems the interference of the heart so dangerous that he entrusts an inventor with the creation of a robot looking exactly like Maria. This robot-Maria is to incite riots and furnish the industrialist with a pretext to crush the workers' rebellious spirit. Stirred by the robot, the workers destroy their torturers, the machines, and release flood waters which then threaten to drown their own children. If it were not for Freder and the genuine Maria, who intervene at the last moment, all would be doomed. Of course, this elemental outburst has by far surpassed the petty little uprising for which the industrialist arranged. In the final scene, he is shown standing between Freder and Maria, and the workers approach, led by their foreman. Upon Freder's suggestion, his father shakes hands with the foreman, and Maria happily consecrates this symbolic alliance between labour and capital.

"On the surface, it seems that Freder has converted his father; in reality, the industrialist has outwitted his son. The concession he makes amounts to a policy of appeasement that not only prevents the workers from winning their cause, but enables him to tighten his grip on them. His robot stratagem was a blunder inasmuch as it rested upon insufficient knowledge of the mentality of the masses. By yielding to Freder, the industrialist achieves intimate contact with the workers, and thus is in a position to influence their mentality. He allows the heart to speak—a heart accessible to his insinuations.

"In fact, Maria's demand that the heart mediate between hand and brain

could well have been formulated by Goebbels. He, too, appealed to the heart—in the interest of totalitarian propaganda. At the Nuremberg Party Convention of 1934, he praised the ‘art’ of propaganda as follows: ‘May the shining flame of our enthusiasm never be extinguished. This flame alone gives light and warmth to the creative art of modern political propaganda. Rising from the depths of the people, this art must always descend back to it and find its power there. Power based on guns may be a good thing; it is, however, better and more gratifying to win the heart of a people and to keep it.’ The pictorial structure of the final scene confirms the analogy between the industrialist and Goebbels. If in this scene the heart really triumphed over tyrannical power, its triumph would dispose of the all-devouring decorative scheme that in the rest of *Metropolis* marks the industrialist’s claim to omnipotence. Artist that he was, Lang could not possibly overlook the antagonism between the breakthrough of intrinsic human emotions and his ornamental patterns. Nevertheless, he maintains these patterns up to the very end: the workers advance in the form of a wedge-shaped, strictly symmetrical procession which points towards the industrialist standing on the portal steps of the cathedral. The whole composition denotes that the industrialist acknowledges the heart for the purpose of manipulating it; that he does not give up his power, but will expand it over a realm not yet annexed—the realm of the collective soul. Freder’s rebellion results in the establishment of totalitarian authority, and he considers this result a victory.

“Freder’s pertinent reaction corroborates what has been said about the way in which the street films as well as the youth films anticipate the change of the ‘system’. Now it can no longer be doubted that the ‘new order’ both series foreshadow is expected to feed upon that love with which Asta Nielsen’s prostitute overflows, and to substitute totalitarian discipline for the obsolete mechanical one. In the case of *Metropolis*, Goebbels’ own words bear out the conclusions drawn from this film. Lang relates that immediately after Hitler’s rise to power Goebbels sent for him: ‘. . . he told me that, many years before, he and the Fuehrer had seen my picture *Metropolis* in a small town, and Hitler had said at that time that he wanted me to make the Nazi pictures.’ ”

THE GENERAL

U.S.A., 1927

8 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: United Artists
 DIRECTION: Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman
 SCRIPT: Al Boasberg and Charles Smith
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Bert Haines and J. D. Jennings

CAST

Annabelle Lee	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Marion Mack</i>
Capt. Anderson	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Glen Cavender</i>
Gen. Thatcher	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Jim Farley</i>
Southern General	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Frederick Vroom</i>
Her Father	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Charles Smith</i>
Her Brother	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Frank Barnes</i>
Three Union Generals	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Joe Keaton</i> <i>Mike Donlan</i> <i>Tom Nawm</i>
Johnnie Gray	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Buster Keaton</i>

WE have seen Buster Keaton twice in recent years; the bitter, sad little appearance in *Sunset Boulevard*, among the forgotten quartet at Norma Desmond's bridge table, and the wonderful last scene of *Limelight*. Here, while Chaplin clowned for the audience, Keaton, aware neither of his partner nor his public, engaged in his solitary struggle with the piano. It was a moment both characteristic and revealing. Chaplin, from the winks and asides of the early two-reelers to the eloquence of *Limelight*, has always addressed himself to an audience. Keaton, locked in a mysterious world of silent endeavour, has remained aloof, uncommunicative.

But to compare Chaplin and Keaton is to find only contrasts. A part of Chaplin's appeal has always rested on the simplest of all the screen's conventions: identification. His is a universal loneliness. Keaton's is self-imposed, undemanding of pity, almost aristocratic in its remote nonconformism. It seems to me, though, that a little too much has been made of the famous deadpan expression. Keaton has himself told how he was trained by his father in the rigid, impassive manner, on the assumption that the funniest effects are those of which the comedian appears unconscious. But he could not neutralise the effect of those melancholy, penetrating eyes; above the energetic body, all sharp and decisive angles, the head is fixed, immobile; only the extraordinary eyes maintain his tenuous contact with humanity.

The hero of *The General* is a little engine driver, turned down by the Confederate recruiting sergeants, dismissed as a coward by his girl, who, in pursuit of his stolen engine, penetrates the Unionist lines, spies on a military conference, rescues the girl, recovers the engine and steams back in triumph to the Confederate encampment. The exploits are preposterously heroic; their manner of execution is brisk but detached. Confronted with the outlandish or the alarming—the disappearance of his train, the discovery that in setting fire to the railway bridge he has placed himself on the wrong side of the blaze, or that, in his grand scheme to fire on the enemy train, he has directed the cannonball straight into the cab of his own engine—Keaton remains imperturbable. This, one feels, is how he expects things to behave; there is no need for undue alarm. It is out of this laconic, matter-of-fact acceptance, this obstinate persistence in effort, however misguided, this untroubled, dream-like logic, that Keaton builds his comedy technique. The film advances in a series of triumphs and setbacks, with each check stimulating him to fresh activity, fresh displays of ingenuity. The train puffs past first the retreating Confederate troops, then the advancing Yankees, while its driver, sublimely unaware, busily saws wood for the engine. It runs steadily towards an obstacle across the line while Keaton, spread-eagled against the front of the engine, comes as close to trepidation as we ever see him before he casually bounces the log out of the way with a neat jab from one he is already clasping.

Some critics have seen Buster Keaton as a lonely little human figure engaged in an unending conflict with the vast mechanical monsters which inhabit his films. Certainly, the inanimate often baffles him, as in the famous sequence in *The Navigator* when the young millionaire on the drifting liner gloomily and ineffectually sets about cooking his breakfast in a ship's galley equipped to feed five hundred people, or at the moment in *The General* when he busily flings logs on to the tender, unaware that they are sliding down on the other side. But somehow the wood is safely loaded, and an ingenious system of pulleys, ropes and levers transforms the liner's kitchen. Keaton is far from being the victim of an implacable and malevolent combination of mechanical forces. Rather, the machine is a partner to be coaxed, worked over and bullied before it will give him what he wants. And so, active and purposeful, the engine driver runs backwards and forwards over the tender and skips from the engine to the line to change the points or to lay his booby-traps. A small part of the attraction of his films, perhaps, lies in the elementary fascination of watching someone else hard at work.

With these simple resources—a railway line, a train to chase and one to be chased—the comedy follows a classically direct course, with scarcely a gag or a situation inserted for its own sake. It is only when the film leaves the trains behind, in the final battle scenes, the fooling with the sword that flies from its scabbard for the last time to impale an enemy sniper, that the effects seem rather too deliberately contrived, the situations a little too real to be altogether funny. In part this may be because the film, directed by Keaton in collaboration with

Clyde Bruckman, conveys, unobtrusively, so exact and stylish a sense of its period. The comedian has strayed on to a real battlefield and, momentarily, the illusion cracks.

Human relationships, defying logic, breaking his solitary concentration of purpose, form the smallest part of any Keaton film. Here, his attitude towards the girl (the resilient and good-humoured Marion Mack) characteristically combines protective affection with exasperation. When she arranges her well-intentioned booby-trap in the path of the enemy train or, under fire from their pursuers, snatches up a broom and begins sweeping out the engine cab, he finds her endearingly ridiculous. But for Keaton the real world is elsewhere.

Innocently and without bravado, Keaton has the measure of his surroundings. He does not, like Harold Lloyd, want to be admired or successful; he is not, like Harry Langdon, a child at large in a puzzling universe; he has not, like Chaplin, assumed the dreams and the sorrows of the world. But his enduring, unsentimental self-sufficiency has its own intimations of melancholy, in the contrast between his determination and his resources as he marches off down the line in pursuit of his runaway train, and, always, in the sad, thoughtful eyes set in the pale poker face. Keaton is the most exact, the most mathematically precise, of comedians, yet as one laughs one wonders: the quintessential Buster Keaton seems always to retreat a little, behind the enigmatic impassive mask of the comedian.

THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT

FRANCE, 1927 7 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Albatross
 DIRECTION: René Clair, from the play by
 Eugene Labiche and Marc Michel
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Nicholas Roudakoff and
 Maurice Desfassiaux
 ART DIRECTION: Lazare Meerson

CAST

The Bridegroom	..	..	..	..	Albert Prejean
The Bride	..	..	..	..	Marise Maia
The Officer	..	..	..	..	Vital Geymond
The Married Woman	..	..	..	..	Olga Tschekowa
The Bride's Uncle	..	..	..	..	Paul Ollivier
The Husband	..	..	..	..	Jim Gerald
The Bride's Father	..	..	..	..	Yvonneck
The Aunt	..	..	..	..	Alice Tissot
The Man with the Necktie	..	..	..	..	Bondi
The Man with the Glove	..	..	..	..	Pre fils
The Valet	..	..	..	..	Alexandrov
The Customer	..	..	..	..	Valentine Tessier
The Mayor	..	..	..	..	Volbert

BEGINNING his career as a journalist, René Clair started film work as an actor before he became assistant director to Baroncelli. *Paris Qui Dort* (1923) and *Entr'acte* (1924), his first films, marked him as a director of the *avant-garde* movement in France. But not until 1927, with *The Italian Straw Hat*, does he establish on the screen his own individualistic style.

The film is a literal translation of the stage play of 1851 by Labiche and Michel, and had its last revival in 1936 when Orson Welles produced it as *Horse Eats Hat* for the Federal Theatre Project.

As a classic example of screen comedy of manners the film is notable for its impersonal presentation of human weaknesses and idiosyncrasies. Clair seems to have no malice in his satirical comments on Society. His attitude to people is a benevolently humorous one. This is not only apparent in *The Italian Straw Hat*. In his early, outstanding sound films, *Le Million* and *Sous Les Toits de Paris*, too, his characters are gentle and take life easily.



Lumière programme of 1895

The Champion





Intolerance

Nanook of the North





The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

Battleship Potemkin





The Navigator



The Italian Straw Hat



The Passion of Joan of Arc

Drifters





Blackmail



Sous Les Toits de Paris



42nd Street



The Informer



The Grapes of Wrath

Citizen Kane



Clair, like Griffith, continued to work with the same associates, and Lazare Meerson who is responsible for the excellent period designs, also designed *Le Million* in 1931. Among his actors, too, Albert Prejean particularly was always in the cast lists of Clair's films.

When the picture was first released, it was very badly received, particularly by the French bourgeoisie, at whom the satire is aimed. The very kindliness of the satire seemed to make it more penetrating and no-one who identified himself with the characters in the film was anxious to see Clair make another.

LONG PANTS

U.S.A., 1927

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Harry Langdon Corporation
 DIRECTION: Frank Capra
 ORIGINAL SCREEN STORY: Arthur Ripley

CAST

Harry Selby	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Harry Langdon</i>
His Father	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Alan Roscoe</i>
His Mother	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Gladys Rockwell</i>
His Bride	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Priscilla Bonner</i>
His Downfall	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Alma Bennett</i>
His Finish	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Betty Francisco</i>

HARRY LANGDON is one of the least well-known of the American screen comedians, and his films are rarely revived. Yet his fame during the twenties was almost as widespread as Chaplin's.

An American by birth, Langdon was a stage actor, working mainly on the vaudeville stage, when he began to make two-reel comedies with Mack Sennett. It was not, however, until he was over forty years old that he made his first feature length film. This was produced for First National, and called *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*. Written by Langdon himself, together with Frank Capra who was at the time one of Mack Sennett's gag men, it brought immediate and widespread success to both Capra and Langdon. This film led to the making of *Strong Man*, perhaps Langdon's best feature film, in the same year, and *Long Pants* in 1927. Both were directed by Capra. The subsequent separation of Capra and Langdon after *Long Pants* meant for the comedian virtually the end of his career. He continued to make films until his death in 1944, working with Roach, and later with M.G.M. where he replaced Stan Laurel in the Laurel and Hardy comedy team. But, as a screen comedian, he was far outdistanced in fame and artistic achievements by Harold Lloyd and Chaplin.

When *Long Pants* was released in England in 1928, the reviews compared Langdon's style of comedy acting with that of Grock rather than Chaplin, and this comparison with a clown rather than a mime is a very apt one. His clothes, his walk and his slow style of comedy acting is unlike either the fights with gadgets which distinguished Harold Lloyd or the detailed naturalistic movements of Chaplin. The famous scene in *Long Pants*, for example, in which Harry tries to entice a dummy policeman away from a crate in which his fiancée is hiding,

shows Langdon's personal style at its best. His clothes are almost identical with those of the clown in any circus and his slow reactions demand little of either cutting or camera movement to point the comic effects.

Capra believed in Langdon primarily as a gag comedian, and his own later films, such as *It Happened One Night* and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, show that his interests as writer and director are with the light and witty, somewhat sentimental comedy demanding a gag comedian. Langdon himself, however, always wished to emphasize the pathos both in his stories and in his own acting. "Comedy is after all the most elemental form of tragedy", he wrote in an essay on *The Comedian*. It was Langdon's wish, therefore, to break away from Capra's style of film comedy that brought about the break-up of the actor-writer team. When Langdon dismissed Capra after *Long Pants* in 1928, the two never worked together again.

The break from Capra meant for Langdon going into independent production alone, and this, perhaps, was what did not appeal to him. He remains the comic actor rather than the creator of comedy, the clown and the little man who thirsts after adventure, but is really happiest safely at home.

THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC

FRANCE, 1928 8 reels

PRODUCTION:	Société Générale de Films, Paris
DIRECTION:	Carl Dreyer
SCRIPT:	Carl Dreyer, from Joseph Delteil's novel
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Rudolf Maté
ART DIRECTION:	Herman Warm, Jean Hugo
ASSISTANTS:	Paul La Cour and Ralf Holm

CAST

Jeanne	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Marie Falconetti</i>
Bishop Pierre Cauchon	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Eugène Silvain</i>
Jean d'Estivet, prosecutor	..	..	..	..	..	<i>André Berley</i>
Loyseleur	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Maurice Schutz</i>
Massieu	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Antonin Artaud</i>

CARL DREYER's work in silent films is probably best known in England through his *Joan of Arc*. Made ten years after the beginning of his film career, the film was commissioned by the Société Générale as a direct result of the phenomenal success of his *Thou Shalt Honour Thy Wife* made in 1925. Dreyer was given the choice of three subjects—Catherine de Medici, Marie Antoinette and Joan of Arc. He decided on the latter and began work in 1926. The film took eighteen months to make and cost seven million francs (approximately £50,000).

Although there had been many film reconstructions of historical events, such as *Intolerance* from America, the Italian spectacle films and *Siegfried* from Germany, *Joan of Arc* differed in every respect from all of these. The script is based on Delteil's novel about Joan of Arc, but Ebbe Neergaard explains in his analysis of the film that Dreyer used little material from the actual story. The film tells only of her trial which is concentrated from the eighteen months it took, into one day. It shows neither Joan the warrior nor Joan the peasant nor Joan the leader of men; it concentrates entirely on Joan the saint. The struggle between Joan's desire to live in May 1429 and her true faith, is the main concern of the film.

There is no attempt, for example, to reconstruct with historical accuracy the castle at Rouen where she was tried. The costumes are not historically correct in every detail and there are no elements of the large-scale spectacle of other historical films.

Working closely and intimately for month after month with Falconetti, Maté the photographer, and the designers, Dreyer created an emotional interpretation of the trial of Joan of Arc. He shot the film almost entirely in close-ups—close-ups of the judges, one by one as they interrogated, intercut with the face of Joan. He placed this against an almost dead-white background which only just suggests the atmosphere of, sometimes a prison, sometimes a church, sometimes a courtroom. The result is a film which seems almost to be the climax of a much longer epic. It is difficult to realise that the film lasts more than half-an-hour. The mood is so intense and this intensity is maintained at such a high pitch, that Dreyer sweeps his spectator into the struggle of the trial and never for one moment eases the tension with side-issues or humour.

For Falconetti this was her only great film part, and it has been said that she gave everything she had to this one part and has therefore never been able to play another film rôle. Neergaard explains that most of the scenes were shot with the director and cameraman on their knees, and even holes were bored into the set to allow Dreyer to get his highly impressionistic angles from below the floor level. The decor was supervised by Warm, who ten years earlier had been partly responsible for the designs of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The film was shot exactly as it was scripted in that order and the set of the castle was a complete building. In this the actors lived and moved as in a real building.

In spite of its lack of sound when almost the entire film is concerned with dialogue, its very silence is more terrifying and moving than sound could perhaps have made it. The subtitles composed in almost biblical language do not seem to break up the story or the tension, and the film remains one of the greatest classics of the silent cinema and the most outstanding of Dreyer's films. The film was first shown in Copenhagen on April 21st, 1928.

STORM OVER ASIA

U.S.S.R., 1928

9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Majrabpom-Russ
DIRECTION:	V. I. Pudovkin
ASSISTANTS:	A. Ledashchov, L. Bronstein
SCRIPT:	O. Brik, from a story by Novokshenov
PHOTOGRAPHY:	A. N. Golovnia
ART DIRECTION:	S. V. Koslovski Aronson

CAST

V. Inkishinov . A Chistiakov . L. Dedinstev . Anna Sujakevitch

PUDOVKIN's third film is the story of a young Mongol trapper who, after being cheated by a European trader to whom he tries to sell a silver fox fur, causes a riot and escapes to the hills when the White army is called in. He joins the partisans, is captured by the Whites and shot. Among his belongings is found an amulet with an inscription that identifies him as a direct descendant of Genghiz Khan. The White general orders the Mongol's body to be brought in: he is found to be still alive, is patched up, and offered to the rebellious locals as their new king. In front of their veiled taunts and exploitation, the Mongol remains passive until he recognises his original fox fur adorning the shoulders of the general's daughter. He breaks out, gallops away to the partisans, and rallies them for a new attack which is to end in their liberation.

The film was originally released under the title *The Heir to Gheniz Khan*, but is now generally known by its German name, *Storm over Asia*. On its first appearance in England, the film's reception was complicated when the uniforms worn by the White Troops were discovered to be British. Fears that a private showing (by the London Film Society) would provoke further questions in Parliament proved to be groundless, however, though none of Pudovkin's silent films were licensed for public showing in this country. In 1950, under Pudovkin's own supervision, the film was slightly re-edited (mainly shortened and speeded up) and supplied with a music and, in parts, dialogue track.

The following critical comment by Paul Rotha is taken from his famous book "The Film Till Now", published by Vision Press:

"With *Storm over Asia* Pudovkin rose to the height of his career in some sequences, whilst in others he lost the thread of his theme by interest in local environment. The whole effect was one of unevenness. In company with the two preceding films, it was a masterpiece of filmic construction, of referential

cross-cutting, and of the representation of mixed mentalities. It opened with a series of landscape shots of distant hills, of small round huts, of great storm clouds; and from the distance the spectator was taken nearer by approaching shots. The whole of the first part up to the visit of the lamaserai was magnificent. Thereafter, the theme inclined to wander, to be interested in local detail rather than in the significance of that detail. There were moments of great power, however, as when the British soldier took Bair to be shot; the witty cross-cutting between the scenes of the general's wife dressing and the preparation of the lamas for the festival; and the terrific storm scenes at the close. These were Pudovkin at his best and most emotional, but the film as a whole was broken up and over-long.

"As is well known, Pudovkin prefers, whenever possible, to work with raw material, building it in terms of filmic representation to achieve his desired result. Consequently he has filled his pictures with the most remarkable types of many nationalities. *Storm over Asia*, for example, in its scenes of the fur market and the festival of the lamas brought material to the screen that had never before been photographed. The types were as amazing as those of the peasants in Eisenstein's *The General Line*. Pudovkin has been very successful in his results with these naturalistic methods till now, and I believe that working on similar lines he will achieve even greater success. I am convinced that his principles of filmic construction, at once scientific, rhythmically structural, philosophic, and analytical, are those calculated to achieve the most powerful results."

BLACKMAIL

BRITAIN, 1929

9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	British International Pictures
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:	John Maxwell
DIRECTION:	Alfred Hitchcock
SCRIPT:	Alfred Hitchcock, Benn W. Levy, Charles Bennett, from a play by Charles Bennett
PHOTOGRAPHY:	John Cox
ART DIRECTION:	Norman Arnold and Wilfred Arnold
EDITING:	Emile de Ruelle
MUSIC:	Hubert Bath and Henry Stafford
STUDIO:	Elstree
RELEASE DATE:	25th November, 1929

CAST

Alice White	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Anny Ondra</i>
Frank Webber	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>John Longden</i>
Mrs. White	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Sara Allgood</i>
Mr. White	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Charles Paton</i>
Tracy ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Donald Calthrop</i>
The Artist	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Cyril Ritchard</i>
The Landlady	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Hannah Jones</i>
The Chief Inspector	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Harvey Braban</i>
The Charlady	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Phyllis Monkman</i>

Blackmail has become one of the most famous films in the history of the British cinema. It was shot first, in its entirety, as a silent picture, but its completion coincided with the widespread use of sound by several Hollywood companies. A desperate decision was made by the producers, British International Pictures, to refilm the bulk of the picture in sound, salvaging just those shots in which sound could be dubbed or was not an essential. Thus Hitchcock became the first British director to engage in the production of a talking film, and he took it in his brilliant stride. Indeed, he brought a new technique to its production, showing a complete understanding of his medium. R. E. Jeffrey, later to become famous as the commentator on Universal Talking News, was engaged as dialogue director (or "Director of Elocution" as he was then known); then a complication occurred because Anny Ondra, who played Alice White, was a German and could speak little or no English. Thus it became necessary for her voice to be dubbed by an unknown English actress, Joan Barry (who later became an important British star in the 1930's). Much of the dubbing was done on the

sound track, but often it became necessary for Miss Barry to secrete herself near the microphone as Miss Ondra mouthed the dialogue. It added to Hitchcock's difficulties, but he triumphed superbly over this and other obstacles. In all, *Blackmail* was a difficult and exciting film to make. Little did Hitchcock or his cast realise that this was a motion picture destined for world fame and one which would go down in cinema history. Not only was it the first talking film made in England, but for many years it remained the best.

Blackmail contains a number of instances of Hitchcock's imaginative use of sound. When the girl sits in her father's shop trembling with fear of the consequences of the deed she has committed, her detective-fiance enters the shop. As she sees his face and suspects that he knows her guilt, the clang of the shop bell reverberates in her brain like the clang of doom. Hitchcock held the ring of the bell all the way along the sound track while the girl gazed fascinatedly at her fiance's face. Did he know that she was a murderess? Had he come to take her to Scotland Yard? One could sense these questions flashing through her mind through Hitchcock's use of the sound trick.

Again, the girl at the breakfast table is made painfully aware of the previous night's deed (in which she had killed the artist with a bread-knife) when her father, loaf of bread in hand, asks her to pass the bread-knife. As she looks up with glazed eyes, the word "knife", "knife", "knife" echoes along the sound track. The atmosphere of fear, guilt and hysteria were extraordinarily well conveyed by what must always be considered one of Hitchcock's particular strokes of genius. He perfected and developed his own inimitable technique of sound film production to an extraordinary degree during the next twenty years.

The ending that Hitchcock had planned for *Blackmail* was as follows. The pursuit was not to be after the blackmailer but after the girl. This would have brought the conflict to a climax with the young detective, who is in love with her, helping her to get away from the other detectives. As he is trying to help his girl-friend to escape, the other policeman, his comrade, arrives, misinterprets what he is doing and congratulates him on catching the murderess. Ostensibly the young man is just a detective, but the audience, of course, knows that he is in love with the girl. He is forced to condone her arrest. Finally she is locked up in her cell and the two detectives walk away. The elder one says, "Going out with your girl to-night?" the younger one shakes his head. "No, not to-night". That was the ending Hitchcock had wanted, but for "commercial" reasons it had to be changed.

FRENCH AVANT-GARDE MOVEMENT

ENTR'ACTE

FRANCE, 1924 2 reels

Commissioned by the Swedish Ballet; directed by René Clair; written by Francis Picabia; music by Erik Satie; with Man Ray, Jean Borlin, Erik Satie; produced by Ballet Suedois de Rolf Mare.

MENILMONTANT

France, 1924 3 reels

Production, direction and script by Dimitri Kirsanov; photography by L. Crouan.

CAST

The Younger Sister	..	..	..	..	<i>Nadia Sibirskaia</i>
The Elder Sister ..	..	..	..	..	<i>Beaulieu</i>
The Young Man	..	..	..	..	<i>Belmont</i>

UN CHIEN ANDALOU

FRANCE, 1929 2 reels

Written, directed and produced by Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali.

Each of these films is a product of the *avant-garde* movement in France. Its members were in revolt against every aspect of realism in the current commercial cinema. The work of Griffith in America had, by 1920, established the claims of the cinema as an art form, and it was natural that rebellious young artists should be drawn to this new medium of self-expression.

In *Entr'acte* there is no story. The film consists of a series of images with no apparent connections, except for the ballet dancer's legs seen through glass—an image which punctuates the whole of the first half of the film. This part is made up entirely of different kinds of movement, both camera movements and movement of action within the frame: matches slipping about on a man's head, a

field gun doing a dance, and the continuous movement of the dancer. It is not, however, until the second half of the film that a definite rhythm can consciously be felt. Here the funeral procession is the theme, and trick photography is used to establish a visual rhythm as though set to music. At this time René Clair was particularly interested in the relationship between the cinema and music, and in *Entr'acte* (which was originally made to synchronise with music—and is largely ineffectual without such accompaniment), he was experimenting to find out how far the visual image could transmit the feeling of musical rhythm. As such, the film is a failure, partly because it is too occupied with camera tricks, and also because there is no theme in the picture corresponding to a musical theme. The primary importance of the film—that it is the second film of René Clair—remains, and it does perhaps explain why Clair managed, in films like *Sous Les Toits de Paris* and *Le Million*, to change his style from the silent to the sound film with such ease and success.

Menilmontant, in contrast to *Entr'acte*, has both a theme and a story; it is primarily the treatment of its theme that is novel. For, unlike the completely realistic treatment in most contemporary entertainment films, it is the way in which the story is told that is experimental in style. An attempt is here made by Kirsanov—a Russian emigré director—to narrate a simple story by a series of visual impressions. There are no subtitles and the characters, particularly the girl, hardly speak once. Their emotions and sufferings are conveyed by associating images which pass through their minds. For example, at the final reunion of the two sisters, so intensely felt by both, the lighted hotel sign flashes onto the screen several times during the scene and this, intercut with close shots of the sisters, indicates that the elder sister has become a prostitute and that this she is now ashamed to reveal.

There is, further, no attempt to set the story in a background of normal social life, but rather to evoke the atmosphere of that background, and the way in which it affects the characters. The camera, except for an occasional cut-away shot, concentrates exclusively on the actors and particularly on the young girl. Streets are unusually empty when she is lonely; when she is busy and happy, an impression is given of constant speed and milling crowds. Sibirskaia, who together with Kirsanov made only one other film in France (*Brumes d'Automne*), gives in this role one of the most delicately sensitive performances in the history of the cinema. Although she is not very well directed as a little girl and lacks real childishness, her performance as an *ingénue* and later as the mother of an illegitimate child is profoundly moving.

In *Menilmontant* the main purpose is to show, rather than to tell a story, to show rather than to explain people, and to do this by easily perceived and recognisable images which indicate thoughts and emotions. The aim of *Un Chien Andalou* differs widely from this. When Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali made the film they were not as yet successful or famous. Dali, although a prolific surrealist painter, was not to have his first one-man show until two years later. Jacques Brunius writes of this film: "The whole effort of Dali and Bunuel bore on the

content of the film, and they loaded it with all their obsessions, all the images of their personal mythology, and deliberately made it violent and harrowing.”

Strongly influenced by current psychological thought, the film purports to be a revelation of Dali's subconscious experiences. It is, in fact, an attempt to show a subjective analysis of the subconscious, and in the method of presentation used, is a film consisting of moving surrealist pictures. The emphasis is not on movement or tricks for their own sake. Each image is of symbolic significance. Yet the purely subjective nature of the analysis makes it quite meaningless to a detached observer; as an account of an experience it therefore fails. As part of an experimental movement in art, it is more closely allied to painting (almost any of the off-the-frame stills from the film might be a surrealist painting) than to any film art. Nevertheless, it has become one of the classics among experimental films because, in spite of its harrowing and pointless effects, it had a great *succès de scandale* and remains perhaps one of the most obvious examples of lack of taste that the cinema has produced.

The whole movement of experiment with the film medium of the 'twenties was an adolescent period for films and film-makers. The possibilities of the silent film were explored to the depth and all manner of tricks were played to exhibit these explorations. For many participants this period constituted their only activity in film production. For them these films served much the same purpose as early poems for professional painters. This applies particularly to Dali, and also to Sibirskaia who returned to stage acting.

For others this period was a time for development. René Clair especially, but also Jacques Prévert, Marcel Carné, Cavalcanti and Jean Renoir, were at this time experimenting to establish their own personal style of film-making and their products are therefore, irrespective of intrinsic merit, of greater interest to the student.

EARTH

U.S.S.R., 1930

6 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Ukrainfilm, Kiev
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Alexander Dovzhenko
PHOTOGRAPHY: Danylo Demutzky
ART DIRECTION: Vasili Krichevsky

CAST

Vasili	<i>Semyon Svashenko</i>
His Father	<i>Stepan Shkurst</i>
His Grandfather	<i>Mikola Nademsky</i>
His Betrothed	<i>Yelena Maximova</i>
Foma	<i>Piotr Masokha</i>
Priest	<i>Nikolai Mikhailov</i>

THE following note, by Thorold Dickinson, is taken from "Soviet Cinema", by Thorold Dickinson and Catherine de la Roche, pub. Falcon Press, London, 1948:

"By contrast with Eisenstein's intellectual approach to the agricultural revolution, it is interesting to compare with *Old and New* the Ukrainian film *Earth*, made by the Ukrainian peasant and painter, Alexander Dovzhenko. Born in 1894, Dovzhenko first earned his living as a school teacher and later as a cartoonist on a newspaper. In 1925 he began writing film scenarios and then from 1927 to 1929 he directed his first three films: *The Diplomatic Bag*, *Zvenigora* and *Arsenal*. His fourth, *Earth* (1929-30), brought him international fame and was his best and last silent film.

"*Earth* rose out of the heart and bones of its maker. Dovzhenko did not need to approach the subject or study the background. Rather the film flowed out of his consciousness.

"It has a slow gentle tempo which is disturbed and speeded up only at moments of conflict or of enthusiasm. The story is simple. Among the fertile undulating landscapes, an old man dies 'as old men must', while the apples ripen on the trees and the corn thickens in the fields. The kulaks defend their boundary fences against the encroachments of the collective farm. The co-operative has bought a tractor which arrives after the customary breakdown with which Soviet peasant films were wont to make fun of the industrialists.

"In Dovzhenko's original, the tractor's radiator boiled over and was replenished with the urine of its enthusiastic purchasers, but this episode was removed by the Soviet censors. The old man's grandson, Vassily, starts reaping

the corn with the help of the tractor, the women bind the sheaves, a threshing machine goes to work and soon the villagers are making bread. Vassily then goes ploughing and drives across the boundaries of a kulak's farm. Work ceases for the day, lovers sit watching the sunset, animals graze, the land rests. Vassily walks home in the moonlight. Happily he begins to dance, a minute figure in the distance kicking up the dust of the lane. Faster and nearer he dances—ecstatic, then suddenly falls. Horses start up from their grazing. A man runs away in the distance. Vassily lies still, the dust floating in the air above his body. He has been shot.

"In the cottage, his father watches beside the body. The village priest arrives, but the father rejects the idea of Christian burial. The villagers come and take the body, making a procession through the fertile fields, ignoring the church where the priest prays alone. The body lies on an open bier and the branches of the trees laden with fruit brush the face as it is carried by. The young kulak, the murderer, runs to the cemetery, shouting that it is he who has killed Vassily. He dances among the graves in a parody of Vassily's dance, but the people ignore him too. Rain falls, glistening on the crops and the fruit. The clouds pass and there is peace again and sunshine on the raindrops.

"The film is a chain of fine pictures, too slow for many tastes, but lyrical without a touch of sentimentality. After an interval of fifteen years, the visual and emotional impact of Vassily's dance in the dusty moonlight still excites the memory. Dovzhenko the peasant never achieved in his military and industrial subjects the satisfying sureness of *Earth*."

Technical Note

The copy of the film used at performances in Britain is a print from a dupe negative, which was in turn made by the National Film Library from a used projection print in the possession of the Netherlands Film Archive in Amsterdam. Undoubtedly, therefore, there has been a certain loss in the photographic quality for which the film in its original form was so highly praised. A certain disjointedness which may be observed in the continuity, however, is apparently not the result of technical defects in the Dutch print, since it has been commented on by others. For example, Paul Rotha, writing of the film in his book "*Celluloid*" (published in 1931) said, "Despite the simplicity of the story, I found that the continuity and consequential development of the incidents—especially in the earlier portions—is a little difficult to follow . . . there are certain points of narrative interest which were not clear until I had seen the picture for a second time." Some breaks in continuity are the result of censorship cuts; (in addition to that mentioned by Thorold Dickinson, cuts were made in at least two other places: one is the scene in which the lover of Vassily, hearing of his death, tears off her clothes in the vehemence of her grief, and another the scene of the woman in labour, during the funeral). For the rest, such discontinuity as there may be is inherent in the construction.

SOUS LES TOITS DE PARIS

FRANCE, 1930 9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Filmsonor-Tobis
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: René Clair
PHOTOGRAPHY: Georges Périnal
ART DIRECTION: Lazare Meerson
MUSIC: Raoul Moretti and Armand Bernard

CAST

Pola	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Pola Ilery</i>
Albert	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Albert Préjean</i>
Fred	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Gaston Modot</i>
Louis	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Edmond T. Gréville</i>

PARIS in 1930—the little side-streets, with their street singers, cafés and suburban apartments. The capricious Pola fascinates three men, Fred, the local wide boy, Albert, the street-singer, and his friend Louis, a hawker. It is Alfred who loves Pola the most, but he is sent to prison for a crime he did not commit, and Pola goes off with Fred. When Albert comes out of prison and tries to win back Pola, he is involved in a knife-fight with Fred. He wins; and then Pola picks her true love—Louis.

With the slenderest of stories—more a succession of sketches than a definite plot—Clair evokes a charmingly romantic and humorous impression of Paris. *Sous les Toits* is the most varied in mood of Clair's films, and has a melodrama and a melancholy not found in the others. The brief sequence when, a few weeks after they had been about to marry and Albert has been sent to prison, the camera lingers in the empty apartment with the settling dust and mice running across the floor, has a real poetic quality. In his first sound film. Clair uses very little dialogue, and orchestrates natural sounds to heighten the effect of his scenes: the ominous accompaniment of trains passing in the dark during the knife-fight, conversations seen but not heard through a window. Clair was ahead of his time in his grasp of the new medium of sound and image, and in his style of poetic realism, for which French films were to become famous.

Two famous talents worked with Clair on this film. *Lazare Meerson*, designer, of Russian extraction, was responsible for the sets of all René Clair's films between *La Proie du Vent* (1926) and *Break the News* (1938), with the

exception of *Le Dernier Milliardaire* and *The Ghost Goes West*. Meerson, who died in 1938, is one of the most important set designers in the history of the cinema, and one of the few whose style is easily recognisable. He also worked with the French director Jacques Feyder, on *Le Grand Jeu*, *Pension Mimosas*, *Les Nouveaux Messieurs* and *La Kermesse Heroique*, did the sets for Korda's *Rembrandt*, the Bergner-Czinner *As You Like It* and *The Citadel*.

Georges Périnal, cameraman, was born in Paris in 1897. He photographed *Sous les Toits de Paris*, *Le Million*, *A Nous la Liberté!* and *Le Quatorze Juillet*, working with Clair and Meerson. His name also appeared as director of photography on many Korda productions, including *Henry VIII*, *Catherine the Great*, *Things to Come*, *Rembrandt* and *The Thief of Bagdad*, and on Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un Poète*. He photographed *The Fallen Idol*, *The Mudlark* and *No Highway*.

DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER

GERMANY, 1931

10 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Deutsche-First National
DIRECTION:	G. W. Pabst
SCRIPT:	Leo Lania, Ernst Vajda and Bela Balazs
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Fritz Arno Wagner
ART DIRECTION:	Andre Andreiev
MUSIC:	Kurt Weill

CAST

Mackie Messer	<i>Rudolf Forster</i>
Polly Peachum	<i>Carola Neher</i>
Tiger Brown	<i>Reinhold Schunzel</i>
Peachum	.. <i>Fritz Rasp</i>
Mrs. Peachum	<i>Valeska Gert</i>
Jenny	.. <i>Lotte Lenja</i>
The Parson	<i>Hermann Thimig</i>
The Street Singer	.. <i>Ernst Busch</i>
Smith	<i>Vladimir Sokolov</i>
	<i>Paul Kemp</i>
Mackie Messer's Gang	} <i>Gustav Puttjer</i>
	<i>Oscar Hocker</i>
	<i>Kraft Raschig</i>
Filch	<i>Herbert Grunbaum</i>

MACKIE MESSER, leader of the London Apaches, falls in love with and marries Polly Peachum without the knowledge or permission of her father, the King of the Beggars. After the splendid wedding feast, composed entirely of stolen goods, Polly tells her angry parents, who, upon her refusal to divorce Mackie, arrange with their friend the Chief of Police to have him arrested. Mackie returns to his friends in the brothel, from which he escapes only to be captured after a visit to another lady of the town. Peachum arranges to break up the Coronation procession by means of a mass parade of beggars and cripples, but tries in vain to prevent this on learning that Polly, who has taken over the leadership of Mackie's gang, has decided to lead a life of authorised crime by purchasing and running a bank. Mackie's escape from prison is contrived by his old flame Jenny the Whore, and the film ends with the reunion of Polly and her

husband and the establishment of a partnership between Peachum and Mackie Messer.

Die Dreigroschenoper (*The Threepenny Opera*) is based on a musical satire by Kurt Weill and Bert Brecht, and this in turn owes its origin to the seventeenth-century operetta "The Beggar's Opera" by John Gay. The film is thus a mixture of social satire—taken from Brecht's play—and musical comedy—the main element of the original opera.

Made just after *Westfront 1918* and immediately prior to *Kameradschaft*, the film brought together Wagner (who was responsible for the photography of *Warning Shadows*) and Andre Andreiev, who had worked with Pabst on *Pandora's Box* and is particularly noteworthy for their work. The fascination of an imaginary Soho underworld as created by the sets and the lighting seems to overshadow the story and even the interest felt in the characters. The atmosphere that Pabst has created is one of semi-ironical, semi-lovable fantasy. It lacks all the biting satire of the play and has little left of the musical abandon of the operetta. Although the three never worked together again, Pabst used Wagner again for *Kameradschaft* and Andreiev joined Pabst in France in the later 'thirties to work with him on *Le Drame de Shanghai* and *Jeunes Filles en Détresse*.

The film achieved great popularity in Germany where the songs were an immediate success and the wit of the dialogue—unfortunately largely lost in the subtitles—was very much appreciated.

(Note: the present copy was originally subtitled in Czech, and these had to be masked before English titles could be made. Furthermore, the aperture of the early sound camera was larger than that of today, and the top of the picture is, therefore sometimes cut off.)

KAMERADSCHAFT

GERMANY, 1931

9 reels

PRODUCTION:	Nero Films
DIRECTION:	G. W. Pabst
SCRIPT:	Ladislaus Vajda, Karl Otten, Peter M. Lampel
ART DIRECTION:	Erno Metzner
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Fritz Arno Wagner, Robert Baberske

CAST

Fritz Kampers . Alexander Granach . Ernst Busch . Elisabeth Wendt

Kameradschaft was based on an actual mining disaster which occurred at the beginning of the century in Courrières, near the German border and in which (as in the film) German miners went to the aid of their French comrades.

By a realistic reconstruction of this incident, and transferring it in time to the period after the Versailles Treaty, Pabst produced what is in effect a passionate plea for international brotherhood. *Kameradschaft* followed *Westfront 1918* (1930) and *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1931), and in all these Pabst was concerned with social problems, and preoccupied above all with pacificism. As Kracauer has noted (*From Caligari to Hitler*), *Kameradschaft* was an advance on the negative pacificism of *Westfront 1918*, which dwelt only on the horror and waste of war, in its positive implication that peace could be founded on working-class solidarity. Although it enhanced Pabst's reputation abroad, however, in Germany it was "praised by the reviewers and shunned by the public. In Neukölln, one of Berlin's proletarian quarters, it ran before empty seats". (Kracauer).

Kameradschaft represents the high-water mark of Pabst's career. In 1933 he made *Don Quixote* in Paris, and some undistinguished melodramas. At the outbreak of the War, he returned to Nazi Germany.

Two other points deserve mention. First it is of interest to note that all the subterranean mining scenes were reconstructed in the studio, and the art director Metzner claimed that the sense of realism obtained thus was greater than could have been obtained in an actual mine.

Secondly, the original version ended with an acidly satirical scene in which German and French officials once more sealed the barrier between the two mines.

TRouble IN PARADISE

U.S.A., 1932

8 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Paramount
PRODUCTION AND DIRECTION:	Ernst Lubitsch
SCRIPT:	Samuel Raphaelson, from the play "The Honest Finder" by Laszlo Aladar
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Victor Milner
ART DIRECTION:	Hans Dreier
MUSIC:	W. Franke Harling

CAST

Lily	Miriam Hopkins
Marianne	.. Kay Francis
Gaston	Herbert Marshall
The Major	Charlie Ruggles
Francois	.. Edward Everett Horton
Giron	C. Aubrey Smith
Jacques (the butler)	Robert Greig

DILYS POWELL, writing in 1949, had this to say about the work of Ernst Lubitsch: "If I try to think of the passage on the screen which has given me the most unexpected, the loudest and the most uninhibited guffaw, my mind inevitably doubles back to the scene in *If I Had a Million*, where Charles Laughton, as the humble, elderly clerk in the vast organisation, after a laborious, expressionless progress through door after door, ante-room after ante-room, enters the ultimate sanctuary and greets his employer with a gesture not usually admitted to the cinema. The episode was, I need hardly say, directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

"At that time (*If I Had a Million* was made in 1932) Lubitsch was one of the most famous and successful figures in Hollywood, with to his credit such pieces as *Forbidden Paradise*, *The Patriot*, *The Love Parade*, *Trouble in Paradise*. He was to remain a famous and successful figure; yet when he died in 1948, there was little of the stir among the serious cinema public which usually accompanies the disappearance of a talent of such calibre. The fact is that in the last decade the talent had lost something of its inventiveness. Lubitsch had been repeating himself; literally, for some of the last films in which he was concerned as producer or director—*Czarina*, for instance, and *That Uncertain Feeling*—were remakes or adaptations of earlier work.

"Yet there were delightful things in Lubitsch's output during the late thirties and early forties: *The Shop Around the Corner* (itself to be remade the other day as a musical); much of *Heaven Can Wait*; all of the enchanting

Ninotchka. The three titles in themselves mean something in Lubitsch's career: they remind us of the range of his work. Sentimental romance in *The Shop Around the Corner*, cynical fun in *Heaven Can Wait*, and in *Ninotchka* a mixture of satire and high comedy—and this, of course, is only part of it. Comedy and melodramatic spectacle, the musical and the serious drama—Lubitsch was to move without apparent difficulty from *Madame Dubarry* in Germany to *The Love Parade* in America, from *The Man I Killed* to *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*. And he was to direct an amazing catalogue of players. Pola Negri and Pauline Frederick, Mary Pickford and Emil Jannings, Ronald Colman and Clara Bow, Ramon Novarro and John Barrymore, Charles Boyer and James Stewart, Maurice Chevalier, Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, Claudette Colbert and the great Garbo herself—the list reads like a Who's Who of Hollywood for the last three decades. Were they to rely on the fame of their stars alone, Lubitsch's films would be inextricably a part of that phenomenon of popular entertainment, the American cinema between 1920 and the half-century.

“We can say all this—list the stars and the themes, talk of the director's command over crowds, his innovations in musical comedy, his gift for satire, his wit—and still the contribution of Lubitsch to the screen escapes us. For his true importance, artistic and historical, lies in one fact: he brought Europe to America. He taught Hollywood to accept the self-conscious sophisticated joke which the man of the world can confidently make before the woman of the world. Enough has been said about the Lubitsch touch—that faintly insolent aside, that detail, that comment flicked into a scene. There have been times when one grew a little tired of the Lubitsch touch, times when one even thought it out of place. When *To Be Or Not To Be* was shown in London in May, 1942, English spectators, some of them at any rate, were inclined to feel that a farce about the operations of the Gestapo in Poland was, in the circumstances, tasteless. Perhaps we were wrong; perhaps the English, who had never set eyes on the Gestapo outside the cinema, were sensitive in the wrong way; at any rate I have heard nothing but praise of the film in countries whose experience might have given them cause for sensitiveness on the subject. I fancy, too, that we were sometimes ungrateful in tiring of Lubitsch's polished satire. We have learned since then what it is like to live on a diet of no fun and all message. Lubitsch has no social message that I can discover—though critics are not wanting to find in his early work a symptom of the Nazism to come. He was one of those few talents who enjoy the cinema: enjoy its range, its speed, its vulgarity, if you like. And we should, I think, be grateful to a man who was, in his enjoyment, never hypocritical.”

Perhaps one of the best summaries of *Trouble in Paradise* is that written by Theodore Huff, in his “Index to the Work of Ernst Lubitsch.”

“*Trouble in Paradise* was one of the most daring, mature, gay and flippant of the Lubitsch films, the two main characters being engaging and suave thieves who never reform or even hint that they may turn over a new leaf. (This was before the Legion of Decency!) But the fact that the insouciant tale didn't take

itself seriously, excused the total absence of anything resembling a moral. Lubitsch, displaying his skill in ever new and imaginative ways, turned out a 'director's picture' which was of somewhat doubtful popular appeal. An almost continuous musical background (an innovation then in a non-musical film) pointed up and commented on the action. The settings by Dreier were the last word in modernistic design. At times one could detect a little René Clair influence in the music, the talking silently behind windows, etc., but it cannot be said that Lubitsch ever actually copied anyone. Herbert Marshall was smooth and easy as a delightful scoundrel and Miriam Hopkins played his ingratiating partner with comic skill. Norman Lusk, veteran critic, considers this Lubitsch film 'the finest of all his pictures'. Yet, possibly because of its unorthodox characters, it lacked something which prevented it from being a great popular success."

42nd STREET

U.S.A., 1933

8 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Warner Brothers
 DIRECTION: Lloyd Bacon
 SCRIPT: James Seymour, Rian James,
 based on a novel by Bradford Ropes
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Sol Polito
 SONGS: Al Dubin, Harry Warren

CAST

Julian Marsh	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Warner Baxter</i>
Dorothy Brock	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Bebe Daniels</i>
Pat Denning	..	..	..	..	..	<i>George Brent</i>
Peggy ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Ruby Keeler</i>
Abner Dillon	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Guy Kibbee</i>
Barry ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Ned Sparks</i>
Billy Lawler	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Dick Powell</i>
Ann ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Ginger Rogers</i>
Geoffrey Waring	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Lyle Talbot</i>
Lorraine	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Una Merkel</i>
Andy Lee	..	..	..	..	..	<i>George E. Stone</i>
Terry Neil	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Eddie Nugent</i>
Mac Elliott	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Allen Jenkins</i>
Jones ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Robert McWade</i>
Jerry ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Harry Axt</i>
Leading Man	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Clarence Nordstrom</i>
Publishers	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Al Dubin, Harry Warren</i>
The Actor	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Henry B. Walthall</i>

42nd Street is the perfect instance of the early American musical: robust and inventive, corny and sophisticated, realised with flair and the sort of gusto that even the best musicals of to-day, with their greater emphasis on prettiness, cannot match. Its production was something of a pioneer venture for it was one of the earliest story-musicals to be written direct for the screen and the first to set its story in a theatrical milieu. The "Putting on a Show" story has been copied perhaps a hundred times since—recent examples are *Cover Girl*, *If You Feel Like Singing*, *The Band Wagon*—but never has the back stage atmosphere been so honestly and felicitously caught (nowadays similar stories tend to be either glamourised or spoofed). For all its period cliches and creakings of plot, one can believe in the film's world as long as it remains on the stage: the star's temperaments and the elderly backer's amorous approaches, the squabbling

chorines and stage directors on the make—all this is sharply observed and presented. *42nd Street* beautifully conveys the mystique of “Show Business”.

Re-seen to-day, *42nd Street* has the extraordinary quality of completely epitomising the musical styles of the time, yet doing it with such verve and skill that most of the numbers remain greatly enjoyable on their own terms. Harry Warren, the composer, and Al Dubin, the lyric-writer, have written songs which remain fresh and charming: “You’re Getting to be a Habit with Me” has a deliciously catchy melody; “Shuffle Off to Buffalo” is brilliantly arranged for a most inventively staged number; and “Forty-Second Street” makes a wonderfully effective finale. Much of the credit for the success of the stage number must go to Busby Berkeley, the dance director. Berkeley is now chiefly associated with his choreography of huge choruses—the big number on counter-rotating platforms is a vintage example—but the more intimately staged routines are surprisingly inventive and the big “Forty-Second Street” finale; boldly breaking the confines of the stage and already foreshadowing the sort of “Ballet” treatment that Minnelli and Gene Kelly have so successfully worked with in recent years, remains a dazzling display of controlled staging and technical skill.

The cast, perhaps more than any other factor, introduces the dated elements: Ruby Keeler’s stiff, unexpressive tap and flat notes are not easy to accept to-day; nor is Dick Powell’s aggressively “juvenile” manner and the heavy mugging of Ned Sparks. But against this there must be set Warner Baxter’s vigorous, intelligent performances and Ginger Rogers’ ageless “Anytime Annie”.

L'ATALANTE

FRANCE, 1934 8 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	J. L. Nounez-Gaumont
DIRECTION:	Jean Vigo
SCRIPT:	Jean Guinée, Jean Vigo and Albert Riera
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Boris Kaufman, Louis Berger
ART DIRECTION:	Francis Jourdain
MUSIC:	Maurice Jaubert

CAST

Jean .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Jean Dasté</i>
Juliette .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Dita Parlo</i>
Père Jules .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Michel Simon</i>
Peddler .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Gilles Margaritis</i>
Boy .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Louis Lefebvre</i>
Barge Owner .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Maurice Gilles</i>
Bargee .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	<i>Raya Diligent</i>

JEAN VIGO is one of the most remarkable artists to have come to the films. Within his tragically short life he produced a small output of work which, nevertheless, has secured his position as one of the most individual of directors. The strange penetrating quality of his imagery, the intensity of feeling with which he clothes these images and the high quality of poetry which he brings to the outward expression of his experience mark him at once as a master amongst moviemakers.

Vigo was born in Paris in 1905 and was the son of the Left-Wing journalist, Miguel Almereyda, whose tragic death in Fresnes prison when Vigo was only twelve left the boy without roots and with only bitter memories of a Society he hated and despised. Ill health was to add to his unhappiness and he spent some time in Nice where he made his first film in 1930—*A Propos de Nice*—an ironic commentary on the middle-class decadence which centres in the Riviera, thus recalling the work of von Stroheim in this field. His second film *Jean Taris, Champion de Natation* was a study of the French swimmer and was noted for its beautiful underwater photography. For both these films he used Boris Kaufman as cameraman, as he was to do for his two better-known films, *Zéro de Conduite* and *L'Atalante*.

Vigo had come to films via the French Film Society movement and was strictly speaking an amateur. But as his ambition grew the inevitable problem

of finance became an important consideration even if his artistic integrity and independence were always to resist commercial pressures.

In 1929 he had married Elizabeth Lazinska and she had financed his first film. He financed his second himself and a French industrialist paid for the last two.

In many ways a film by Vigo is an outstanding experience and demands an openness of mind in the spectator which discards the search for stereotyped patterns of presentation conditioned by the largely commercial nature of the cinema to which one is accustomed. Vigo deliberately plays with the timing of his images. He will hold a scene on the screen for what may seem an interminable length but one can be certain that the effect he requires is completely dependent on that particular treatment. The long-drawn-out procession from the church to the barge in *L'Atalante* is a case in point.

In *L'Atalante*, his last film, he tells the story of a peasant girl married to the skipper of a barge and of the daydreams of the young wife as the barge moves on its way towards Paris. The conflicts that spring up in her mind during the claustrophobic days on the barge. Her separation from her husband and the ultimate reconciliation.

Although the film as presented does not represent altogether the intention of Vigo it is substantially his film and the qualities of his art are very obvious throughout.

In depicting the life on the barge Vigo is in many ways strictly realistic. Grierson, writing of *L'Atalante*, said: "The chief thing about the film is the quality of Vigo as a director. He tells the right story; he tells it in a style peculiar to himself. It is an exciting style. At the base of it is a sense of documentary realism which makes the barge a real barge—so exact in its topography that one could find one's way on it blindfold and dead drunk on a windy night."

On top of all this is the crazy world of the old man, Père Jules, and his strange collection of bric-à-brac, his grotesque tattooing and his curious gramophone. The sleight-of-hand cyclist and his hypnotic attractions.

When Vigo had completed the film he fell seriously ill as a result of the strain of creation and the financial struggles involved in getting his film made. As he lay dying, commercial interests were already tampering with his work. Its premiere took place in Paris on the day of his funeral. His actors who had worked with him on the film spoke of his achievement and passing with tears and eloquence.

Thus with but four films in all, amounting to 3½ hours' running time, Vigo made a contribution to the Cinema of lasting importance. His death at the early age of 29 was a loss not easily calculable.

NINETY DEGREES SOUTH

BRITAIN, 1934 7 reels

PRODUCTION, DIRECTION

AND PHOTOGRAPHY:

FOREWORD:

CÓMMENTARY:

Herbert G. Ponting

Vice-Admiral E. R. G. R. Evans

Commander F. A. Worsley

A RECORD of Captain Robert Scott's expedition to the Antarctic, as taken by a member of the expedition.

Although *Ninety Degrees South* is the record of an actual event, it can hardly be called a documentary and has more the qualities of a highly dramatic story film. Beginning with an introduction by Ponting in person, of the main people who took part in that expedition to the Pole, the producer of the film goes on to describe both verbally, by means of a commentary spoken by himself in the first person, and visually, as his camera pictures the journey, the planning and the organisation of Scott's great expedition.

Once the ship has left New Zealand where the story begins, he shows the life of the men and animals on board. The film continues with a description of the things they see during the sea voyage, and then goes on to describe their landing on the edge of the great ice barrier where they establish their headquarters and break their last link with civilisation by sending home the ship on which they came and which is to collect them again in a year's time. Finally Ponting recalls, with the aid of Scott's diary, the last stages of the expedition.

THE INFORMER

U.S.A., 1935

9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	R.K.O. Radio Pictures
DIRECTION:	John Ford
SCRIPT:	Dudley Nichols, from the novel by Liam O'Flaherty
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Joseph H. August
ART DIRECTION:	Van Nest Polglase and Charles Kirk
EDITING:	George Hively
MUSIC:	Max Steiner

CAST

Gypo Nolan	Victor McLaglen
Mary McPhillip	Heather Angel
Dan Gallagher	Preston Foster
Katie Madden	Margot Grahame
Frankie McPhillip	.. Wallace Ford
Mrs. McPhillip	Una O'Connor
Pat Mulligan	.. Donald Meek
Terry	J. M. Kerrigan
Bartley Mulholand	Joseph Sawyer
Tommy Connor	Neil Fitzgerald
The Blind Man	D'Arcy Corrigan
Donahue	.. Leo McCabe
Daley	Gaylord Pendleton
Flynn ("The Judge")	.. Francis Ford
Madame Betty	.. May Boley
The Lady	Grizelda Harvey
Street Singer	Dennis O'Dea
Man in Wake	.. Jack Mulhall
Young Soldier	.. Bob Parrish

JOHN FORD's career as a film director began early in the silent period, but his name as one of the foremost artists of the American cinema was made by his association with the scriptwriter, Dudley Nichols, when they made *The Informer* together in 1935. Lewis Jacobs in *The Rise of the American Film* states that Ford was in a strong position as a commercial director when after five years' pressure he managed to persuade the studios to let him make this film. Jacobs writes:

"Instead of salary Ford took a percentage of the profits. The production is said to have cost \$218,000, a relatively small sum; \$5,000 was paid for the rights to Liam O'Flaherty's novel. The picture took only three weeks to shoot,

and Ford declared it was the easiest he ever made. And no wonder: he says he dreamed of the film for five years" (p. 480).

The Informer is an example of the near-perfect union of theme and structure. It has complete simplicity, unspoiled by deviations and sub-plots. Each episode is short, a constructive contribution to the carrying forward of the action from its beginning (the temptation, leading up to the betrayal of Frankie by his friend, Gypo, the brainless giant), through its middle (the foolish behaviour of Gypo deprived of the leadership of the man he has betrayed, leading up to his arrest and trial by the Rebel organisation) to its end (the flight of Gypo from earthly justice and the moments that lead up to his death before the altar where Frankie's mother forgives him). The unities are observed, of action, of place (the back streets that harbour the Rebels) and of time (the action is completed over-night, from dusk to dawn). The inevitability of *The Informer* make it one of the rare tragedies so far created for the screen.

The film begins with the great figure of Gypo in the narrow streets, lamp-lit and misty. The street-sets are of the barest economy, their effect of realism achieved by a few details, their atmosphere created by the highlights from the lamp-posts and doorways. With no word of dialogue until well into the first reel, the feeling of the film is created by the poster offering the £20 reward for information about Frankie McPhillip, a poster which Gypo tears down but which, blown by the wind, haunts him, clinging to his feet as he listens to the street-tenor singing "Rose of Tralee", blowing on until it brings us to the feet of Katie, Gypo's girl-friend for whom he eventually betrays Frankie in order to buy them both a passage to the States. It is then that the first word is spoken by Katie, "Gypo—", like a wail, the trailing note of it caught up by the music, lonely, full of pleading. But the wind blows the poster on until it is eventually burnt before Gypo's staring eyes in the Rebel Commandant's hide-out. The close lamp-lit streets and archways, the steps and courts and alleys, the bright bar-rooms, the fish-and-chip shop and other refuges from the bleak pavements are a major part of this film, as they were of Fritz Lang's *M* made before it and Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out* made since.

Wherever he can, Ford uses visual methods of building tension. Gypo in an agony of fear after the betrayal suddenly finds himself throttling a man outside the police-station. But the man is blind and crazy. Nevertheless at the later trial scene, the camera creeps round the witnesses and comes to rest on this same mad empty face. Gypo, in funds with the reward money, enters a bar; the few people in the bar leave it just at the moment Gypo shows his cash, unconsciously ostracising him. Gypo after the death of Frankie goes to visit the dead man's mother in an agonised attempt to appear innocent. He is already drunk, and he blunders in upon the assembled family and mourners. The women are chanting, and the great dark body of Gypo sits in the foreground like a shroud over the scene. He bursts out "I'm sorry for your trouble, Mrs. McPhillip." The wake suddenly stops: they stare at him; he jumps up; the accusing coins drop on the floor from his pocket, and the rest of the scene is the tension of exchanged

glances of suspicion. This method of timed glances shows the reactions of Commandant Gallagher and his lieutenants to Gypo as the portrait of Frankie on the poster burns in the grate. So, too, the visual rather than the aural method is used when the young Rebels draw the cuts to see who is to shoot the imprisoned Gypo. No one wants to do it, least of all the man who draws the cut for the job. The heads of his companions withdraw out of the frame of the picture; then the hand offering the last cut withdraws. The executioner is left alone, isolated with the symbol of his task.

Nevertheless, the film is rich in dialogue scenes where Victor McLaglen is seen at his best. Here the emphasis shifts from the symbolic, carefully selected visual touches just described to words and actions of complete realism and conviction. Outstanding scenes include Gypo drunk and garrulous with recriminations against Frankie's betrayer when he is summoned before the Rebel Commandant, Gypo more drunk and treating everyone in the street to fish-and-chips, Gypo in the middle of the night visiting a brothel with a buddy anxious that the cash should be spent to his advantage, the trial of Gypo, and the scene in Katie's small bedroom after his escape when he lies down like a child in front of the fire to sleep off his exhaustion. The scenes are human and right and apt; they are vigorous, crazily energetic, drunken or touching, according to the moment and the mood. They are scripting as a film should be scripted, and they are most notably directed and acted, often with the barest simplicity.

If there is a weakness in the film it comes towards the end in the scene when Katie comes to plead for Gypo's life with Gallagher, who is in love with Frankie's sister. Here the dialogue seems to leave aside what would have been said in order to dramatise the sentiment of the situation. Similarly after Gypo has been shot at close range, he manages to stagger to the Church, drag himself inside and reach the altar before which Frankie's mother is kneeling. Although this end is right in terms of theme, for Gypo above all things needs to feel forgiveness from both man and God before he dies, the playing of this scene is in the exaggerated style of melodrama, and therefore is out of keeping with the treatment of the film, as a whole.

Nevertheless, *The Informer* remains one of the outstanding achievements of the American screen. It bears all the marks of the artistic conviction which led Ford and those associated with him to bargain with the studio authorities to be allowed to make it, and to achieve these results with such sure economy of effort on the floor. Victor McLaglen gives a performance which remains vivid in the memory, like having met a man briefly whom one cannot somehow forget. Gypo commits an evil of the worst kind; he spends the night following in drunkenness and boasting and yet he never ceases to command sympathy as a man incapable of responsibility for what he does. His tragedy is a sheer inability to understand; he is a fool who blunders into wisdom at the expense of his life. There are many such people in the world. *The Informer* has the universality which belongs to tragedy.

THE BRITISH DOCUMENTARY MOVEMENT, 1929-1936

DRIFTERS

BRITAIN, 1929 4 reels

PRODUCTION AND DIRECTION: John Grierson
PHOTOGRAPHY: Basil Emmott

NIGHT MAIL

BRITAIN, 1936 2 reels

PRODUCTION: John Grierson, for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Basil Wright and Harry Watt
PHOTOGRAPHY: F. Jones and H. Fowle
SOUND: Alberto Cavalcanti

THE SONG OF CEYLON

BRITAIN, 1934 4 reels

PRODUCTION: John Grierson, for Ceylon Tea
Propaganda Board
DIRECTION: Basil Wright
ASSISTANT: John Taylor
MUSIC: Walter Leigh

IN 1929, John Grierson joined the Empire Marketing Board and began to organise the E.M.B. Film Unit. With this unit came into existence the nearest approach to a deliberate film school or group that this country has seen. As teacher-producer, Grierson gathered round him young film enthusiasts anxious to escape from the artificialities of the studio feature productions. Under him directors like Arthur Elton, Paul Rotha, Edgar Anstey, Basil Wright and Harry Watt, developed a programme of films which came to be called documentary—a term all the more fruitful, perhaps, for never having been exactly defined.

When, in 1934, the Empire Marketing Board came to an end, the complete unit was taken over by the G.P.O. and re-named the G.P.O. Film Unit.

As the only film which Grierson himself ever directed and as the forerunner of the many productions of the Empire Marketing Board, *Drifters* has gained the reputation almost of a myth. Grierson, by training a sociologist, himself admitted that his interest in films was primarily that of the educationist. The aesthetics of the film medium were relatively unimportant to him and his main aim in *Drifters* as well as later productions was, in the widest sense, to instruct. Thus *Drifters* showed to cinema audiences, unlike any previous film, "the man behind the job". In *Drifters* the job was that of the herring fleet and the story described how the herring came from the sea to the supper table. The influence of Russian film-making on Grierson's technique in this film is apparent.

Night Mail was made seven years later when the G.P.O. Film Unit had acquired its own sound equipment. It was also made with the guidance of Cavalcanti, whom Grierson had brought into the unit to research into the use of sound and whose first experiment, *Pett and Pott*, had taken the form of a fully recorded sound track made prior to shooting. Although *Night Mail* has some effective visual cutting, therefore (especially in the scenes of the mail bags being picked up from the track-side depots), it was chiefly noted at the time for its experimental use of sound, especially the employment of Auden's verse in the final sequence to accompany the movement of the train and lift the film into a lyrical mood. From today's viewpoint this does not seem to have been entirely successful; at least it has not been often repeated.

Although Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon* was made two years earlier than *Night Mail*, we are showing it last in our programme, mainly because it is so widely separated from the first two films in both subject and style. It is, in fact, the work of a brilliant individual talent, and, although born of the British documentary movement, it nevertheless stands out from other documentaries of its time as something quite distinct.

Song of Ceylon deals with the life and customs of the people of Ceylon, especially in its relation to the impact of Western commerce. No less interesting, however, than this subject-matter, photographed by Wright with remarkable skill and sympathy, is the treatment. He conceived the whole film in the manner of a musical composition, dividing it into four movements (The Buddha, the Virgin Island, the Voices of Commerce, and the Apparel of a God), and editing his material in an impressionistic and lyrical manner. He also worked in the closest collaboration with the composer of the actual music, Walter Leigh. The result is a piece of work which will always have a permanent place in the history of this country's contribution to the finer achievements of the cinema.

LE JOUR SE LEVE

FRANCE, 1939 9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Sigma—Frogerais
 DIRECTION: Marcel Carné
 SCRIPT: Jacques Prévert, from a story by Jacques Viot
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Curt Courant and Bac
 ART DIRECTION: Trauner
 MUSIC: Maurice Jaubert

CAST

Francois	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Jean Gabin</i>
Francoise	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Jacqueline Laurent</i>
Clara ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Arletty</i>
Valentin	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Jules Berry</i>
Police Officer	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Jacques Baumer</i>
Concierge	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Mady Berry</i>
Gaston ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Bernard Blier</i>
A Singer	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Germaine Lix</i>
Polo ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Perez</i>

THIS film probably represents the peak of the achievement of the director Marcel Carné working in association with the poet Jacques Prévert. In the subsequent films of the war and post-war years the fatalistic poetic formula of Prévert increasingly dominated Carné, who up to *Le Jour se Lève* had subjected every element of his work, character, theme and dialogue, to his own penetrating sense of the needs of the film medium. The later films became more and more static, the superb presentation of Prévert's haunting and wordy scenes of dialogue between strange, half-real characters who move about in settings closely derived from life itself. Prévert's magic lies in his effective idealisation of both the eccentric and the apparently ordinary in humanity in order to serve the ends of his fatalistic vision in which beauty and love are defeated by the jealous forces of evil.

In *Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se Lève* Prévert's feeling for spiritual defeat and Carné's hard sense of locality and character blended perfectly. Touches with a certain popular sentimentality (the orphans in love) and the element of horror (the vaudeville artist and his treatment of his dogs), *Le Jour se Lève* is grounded on real human experience of love and beauty and ugliness. This makes it very moving, even when it is seen as often as I have seen it; like a fine play

or novel it stands the test of repetition, a test which punctures the emotional blandishments of lesser films which are effective only for one viewing.

The story of *Le Jour se Lève* is simple enough. A chance meeting between an honest workman and a pretty flower-seller leads to a deeply-felt love affair. On the man's side this idealistic relationship is supplemented by the earthly attachment he has to a showman's assistant, a good-humoured, easy woman capable in her own way of great loyalty and affection; on the girl's side she is fatally fascinated by the showman himself, a half-mad representative of evil whose lust to destroy the happiness of others is so strong that he is prepared to destroy himself in the process. He is a fanatic, believing in his own lies as they pass from one distorted phase to another, fascinating the orphan Francoise with the colour of their mystery and their glimpse of unknown places, revolting the patient honesty of Francois until he is goaded into destroying the bestial man who seeks to destroy him. It is easy to see from this bare summary how such people and such a story slip easily into the pigeon-holes of symbolism, and once this is done how easy it is to say now that this fatalism of theme belongs spiritually to pre-war France waiting with fascinated inertia for her own destruction by war and invasion like the landowners who people Tchekov's plays. It is a melancholy thought that the post-war malaise of France has allowed the theme to be intensified in *Les Portes de la Nuit* instead of transformed by victory into a more vital philosophy.

Technically *Le Jour se Lève* is a most exciting film. By leading off with the harsh establishment of an act of violence in the middle of a scene of ordinary tenement life it might be said that Carné played a strong card anyhow, but an examination of the methods by which the tension at the beginning of the film is created in terms of good cinema technique shows that he does not simply depend on the shock of the mortally wounded man reeling out of Francois's room to establish the effect for him. The tension is established first by Jaubert's sinister music which has something of the same effect as that which accompanies the camera moving up the ironwork gates of Xanadu at the beginning of *Citizen Kane*. The scene is established by the briefest shots seen over the backs of two cart-horses in the foreground, with the tall tenement standing in the background of the grim little industrial *place*. Then the door at the head of the stairs is seen, shots are heard behind it, the door is wrenched open, a man in a check coat staggers out with his hands pressed to his belly. He tips and falls down the stairs to the landing below up to which a blind man is climbing, tapping with his stick. This last touch reaches its climax with the blind man's terrified cries as he feels the body with the stick. The atmosphere is not one of mere violence; it is one of portentous violence. The difference is created by the selective, rhythmic, suggestive handling of the incident and its locality.

There are many scenes, combining a careful choice of background with an equally careful choice of character-acting, which suggest the whole significance of the theme to the viewer. This feeling for the medium as well as for the theme is the sign of artistic maturity. There is profound irony in the handling of the

deployment of the small army of police and the watching crowd which is friendly to Francois but enjoys the spectacle of his trouble; this is in its way as subtle as the contrast of the isolated man in the high attic tower smoking his last cigarettes and putting his memories and emotions into shape to the accompaniment of low pulsations of music like the rhythms of a dying heart. Never did flashbacks emerge more necessarily from the psychology of a story than do those which Francois is forced to recall before our eyes: they come as naturally as the imaginary reconstructions created during a sleepless night of emotional anxiety. The music swells up to bursting-point as each memory is born. On the other hand there is great tenderness in both kinds of love scene which occur throughout this dark-toned film, the sacred love for Francoise epitomised in the simple scene in her bedroom and transfigured in the lovely scene in the greenhouse of flowers (themselves the symbols of her fresh, young beauty), and the profane love for Clara, an honest love of the body based on an easy and friendly acceptance of pleasure. The two women, united in the last attempt to protect their man at the tragic end of the film, are portrayed in fine contrast by the remote, innocent Jacqueline Laurent and the superbly casual Arletty. Gabin with his suggestion of the workman-poet who does not know his own sensitivity is equally well cast. But the outstanding performance of the film, because it is the most difficult to make really convincing, is that of Jules Berry as the fanatic masochist, the showman who must give pain for its own sake, even to himself. This terrifying characterisation is completely successful: the madness is in his veins and not merely in his contract, as seemed the case with Vincent Price's portrayal of the same man in the American version of the story.

The film curves back to its beginning, the end of the last flashback re-enacting from Francois's side of the door the scene which was first shown from the staircase. Then the turmoil of police, crowds and hysterical women subsides with the revolver shot of Francois's suicide, and then follows an unforgettable picture of the body lying on the floor as the cloud of tear-gas creeps slowly over it, and the hush is broken by the insistent little bell of the dead man's alarm-clock. The end is symbolised completely by this last perfectly-imagined device of sound and image; dawn arrives with a splendour which takes no account of the loneliness of men and women enduring the pain of love destroyed by evil.

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

U.S.A., 1940

13 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: 20th Century-Fox
 DIRECTION: John Ford
 SCRIPT: Nunnally Johnson, based on the novel by John Steinbeck
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Gregg Toland
 MUSIC: Alfred Newman
 ART DIRECTION: Richard Day and Mark-Lee Kirk
 EDITING: Robert Simpson
 SOUND: George Leverett and Roger Heman

CAST

Tom Joad	..	..	..	..	..	..	Henry Fonda
Ma Joad	..	..	..	..	..	..	Jane Darwell
Casey ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	John Carradine
Grampa	..	..	..	..	..	..	Charley Grapewin
Rose of Sharon	..	..	..	..	..	..	Dorris Bowden
Pa Joad	..	..	..	..	..	..	Russell Simpson
Al ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	O. Z. Whitehead
Muley ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	John Qualen
Connie ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Eddie Quillan
Granma	..	..	..	..	..	..	Zeffie Tilbury
Noah ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Frank Sully
Uncle John	..	..	..	..	..	..	Frank Darien
Winfield	..	..	..	..	..	..	Darryl Hickman
Ruth Joad	..	..	..	..	..	..	Shirley Mills
Thomas	..	..	..	..	..	..	Roger Imhof
Caretaker	..	..	..	..	..	..	Grant Mitchell
Wilkie ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Charles D. Brown
Davis ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	John Arledae
Policeman	..	..	..	..	..	..	Ward Bond
Bert ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Harry Tyler
Bill ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	William Pawley
Father ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Arthur Aylesworth
Joe ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Charles Tannen
Inspection Officer	..	..	..	..	..	..	Selmar Jackson
Leader	..	..	..	..	..	..	Charles Middleton
Proprietor	..	..	..	..	..	..	Eddie Waller
Floyd ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Paul Guilfoyle
Frank ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	David Hughes
City Man	..	..	..	..	..	..	Cliff Clark
Book-keeper	..	..	..	..	..	..	Joseph Sawyer
Tim ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Frank Faylen

Agent ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Adrian Morris</i>
Muley's Son ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Hollis Jewell</i>
Spencer ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Robert Homans</i>
Driver ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Irving Bacon</i>
Mac ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Kitty McHugh</i>

THE magnificent and controversial material of Steinbeck's novel posed a problem for the Hollywood film-makers which was faced with courage and imagination and in consequence the film of *The Grapes of Wrath* as realised by John Ford must mark the highest peak of achievement in that community's long traffic with the art of the film. Ford, who has never to my mind shown great depths of understanding of people in his films, has here suddenly produced the great film document of the common man and with a passionate sincerity and overwhelming integrity has combined his flair for epic landscapes with a true illumination of the lives of the humble, the suffering and the dispossessed.

The opening of the film is a memorable one. This flat arid soil crossed by interminable roads picked out by the gaunt telegraph poles, emphasises the emptiness and loneliness of the environment and a sense of foreboding is quickly established in our minds by the scene between Tom Joad and the truck-driver. So skilful is the direction of Ford that we are involved with these people of the story in a way that is unique and we feel the blows of fate hammering at the pit of our bellies all through the film. The gallery of characters is drawn with a sure hand, and for once the Ford players take on individual life and vitality and stand out from their surroundings which alternately shape and threaten to destroy them.

For whatever other qualities this film may possess it is primarily a film about people, people who transcend the incidental evil and ugliness of life by their innate qualities of goodness and human courage. And when the meanness and malice of cruel men have done their worst it is the great spirit of Ma Joad and Tom Joad and the preacher Casey which remains. It is because of this positive affirmation of life that the film soars to greatness.

The imagery which Ford brings to his picture is admirably captured by the camera of Gregg Toland and the richness of content of these images is beautifully expressed in its treatment. Whether the subject be the contrasting landscapes of this odyssey or the sculptured faces of harassed people whom suffering makes sensitive there is hardly a shot which does not illuminate or reveal.

The devotion of all concerned in the making of this picture to the central theme has resulted in inspired craftsmanship and in the words of Basil Wright: "It is almost impertinent to refer to the production qualities of the film. The direction, the photography, and the editing, are devoted to a grim realism which is strictly and without exaggeration comparable to the realism of Flaubert, Turgeniev, Daumier, and Zola. *The Grapes of Wrath* is, in fact, the greatest masterpiece the screen has ever produced; in it John Ford has established in vivid and inescapable terms the knowledge of good and evil. It is the Pilgrim's

Progress of our day and age, and it is the ultimate, violent stick-at-nothing indication of the democratic faith. It was made by a Hollywood company, but no Soviet co-operative could equal it; it is non-party, non-political, non-axe-grinding statement; it tells us that humanity has a soul—a soul which it is worth fighting for in very practical terms ‘not without dust and heat’.”

CITIZEN KANE

U.S.A., 1941

12 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	R.K.O. Radio Pictures
PRODUCTION AND DIRECTION:	Orson Welles
SCRIPT:	Orson Welles and H. Mankiewicz
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Gregg Toland
ART DIRECTION:	Van Nest Polgase
EDITING:	Robert Wise
MUSIC:	Bernard Herrmann

CAST

Citizen Kane	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Orson Welles</i>
Jedediah Leland	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Joseph Cotten</i>
Mrs. Kane	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Agnes Moorehead</i>
Mr. Bernstein	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Everett Sloane</i>

KANE, an aged millionaire, dies in his palatial retreat "Xanadu" uttering one last word, "Rosebud". In a *March of Time* type of newsreel, outstanding stages of his public life are shown, but the producer is dissatisfied. This does not show the real Kane. He commissions a reporter to go out and find out about the man himself, and suggests that he tries to discover the significance of his dying word. In a series of interviews between the reporter and Kane's associates, one sees Kane's life unfolded, his departure from home to be educated when his mother is left a legacy, the purchase of a newspaper with his inherited wealth, his business success: his marriage to the President's daughter: a scandal with a certain Susan Alexander which ruins his political career: his subsequent marriage to Susan and megalomaniac and abortive attempts to make her an opera singer and his death in lonely splendour in "Xanadu". The reporter concludes that no single word can explain a man's life. But a last tantalising clue to significance is given in a shot of a child's sledge, embellished with the word "Rosebud", being thrown with Kane's other bric-a-brac on to a fire.

This is unquestionably one of the most intelligent films the cinema has produced. No one who is really interested in the cinema can afford to miss it. Even those who go to the cinema simply for a few hours' entertainment, and who even perhaps profess to be bored by intelligence, find themselves curiously spellbound by this spirited attempt to break with most of the formulas which Hollywood holds so dear.

Probably more has been written on *Citizen Kane* than on any other film. For some critics, it lacks human warmth. For others, the technical innovations were either not innovations at all, or else were of little value. Others, of course,

have praised it as being one of the great films of all time. The truth does not lie somewhere in between. To those who complain that *Kane* has no heart, one can only answer that it does, and suggest that they look again at the sequence of Susan Alexander Kane's attempted suicide. To those who claim that the innovations were old-hat, or that the use of ceilings has no relation to cinematic art, one can only answer that, new or not, the effects Welles used in *Kane* (wide-angle shots, ceilings, etc.) were meaningful and were used in a way that was completely original. To be sure, one or two of the effects seem a little dated—the lighting of the scene in the library, for example—but does it matter? The fact remains that Welles succeeded in his first film in changing our ideas of what the cinema is. Direction, narration, the use of sound, of cutting and editing, subject matter—none have been the same since *Kane*.

Now that almost everyone has seen the film at least once, now that everyone knows what “Rosebud” is, we can see clearly that the search for “Rosebud”, which seemed to some to smack of catch-penny psychoanalysis, is neither more nor less than a thread to hang the film on. If the reporters had discovered that “Rosebud” was the sledge Kane was forced to leave behind—in the life he was forced to leave behind—would that have explained Kane more fully than did the facts they had already found? I doubt it. Kane's motivations, his psychology are, as it were, built in to the film. In any case, Kane does not need to be explained; he is there. Welles has created a character with as much skill as any nineteenth-century novelist. But instead of using the pre-war cinema's typical narrative technique—which was only a prolongation of that of the nineteenth-century novel—he has created a technique which is specifically his and specifically cinematic. And he has done more: he has given us a picture of America during the years from 1880 to 1940 that is equal in intensity to John Dos Passos's “U.S.A.”

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

BRITAIN, 1945 9 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Cineguild
 PRODUCERS: Noel Coward, Anthony Havelock-Allan,
 and Ronald Neame
 DIRECTION: David Lean
 SCRIPT: Noel Coward, David Lean and
 Anthony Havelock-Allan
 PHOTOGRAPHY: Robert Krasker
 ART DIRECTION: L. P. Williams
 EDITING: Jack Harris
 MUSIC: Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto,
 played by Eileen Joyce (pianoforte) with the
 National Symphony Orchestra conducted by
 Muir Mathieson

CAST

Laura Jesson	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Celia Johnson</i>
Alec Harvey	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Trevor Howard</i>
Albert Godby	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Stanley Holloway</i>
Myrtle Bagot	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Joyce Carey</i>
Fred Jesson	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Cyril Raymond</i>
Dolly Messiter	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Everley Gregg</i>
Beryl Walters	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Margaret Barton</i>
Stanley ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Dennis Harkin</i>
Stephen Lynn	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Valentine Dyall</i>
Mary Norton	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Marjorie Mars</i>
Mrs. Rolandson	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Nuna Davey</i>
Woman Organist	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Irene Handl</i>
Bill ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Edward Hodge</i>
Johnnie ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Sydney Bromley</i>
Policeman	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Wilfred Babbage</i>
Waitress	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Avis Scutt</i>
Margaret	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Henrietta Vintcent</i>
Bobbie ..	..	..	..	..	..	<i>Richard Thomas</i>
Clergyman	..	..	..	..	..	<i>George V. Sheldon</i>
Doctor ..	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Wally Bosco</i>
Boatman	..	..	..	..	..	.. <i>Jack May</i>

THERE was an unusual atmosphere after the London press-show of *Brief Encounter*. The British critics are of very differing temperament and outlook, but most of them had obviously been moved by the sincerity and the directness of emotion of this film. A few of us agreed that the subject of love had seldom been so sensitively handled outside the best French cinema.

The story is based on one of Noel Coward's short plays. It is an episode in the life of Laura Jesson, a married woman who comes from her village every Thursday to the local town of Milford to shop and go to the pictures. One evening at Milford Junction a piece of coal-dust which has got into her eye is removed by Alec Harvey, a young married doctor who is also waiting for a train. This brief encounter is followed first by a casual meeting in a tea shop, then by a lunch together, a cinema, and a swift realisation of mutual attraction that neither knows how to resist.

Both are happily married. That is, they are settled and have young families; but their marriages are unattended by the fuller passion of love. She finds in him the quality of vitality and inspired enthusiasm for his work which is what she has desired most in a man and what she misses in her kindly unconcerned husband, who spends his evenings solving crossword puzzles. He finds in her the vision of a newly awakened beauty, quickened as it is by the discovery of her love for him.

The film is a tragedy because both of them are old enough to realise that their several responsibilities are too involved to be abandoned and that their love must be sacrificed to these responsibilities. In a curious way it is their social sense rather than their affection for their dependants which enables them to break off the beautiful relation before it completely overpowers them. The cause of love itself is for them a lost cause, and they know this without the squalid promptings of lying and deceit into which they are forced in order to hide their love from their families and from the inquisitive investigations of scandal. So they part.

Brief Encounter is beautifully made. It starts with the final parting in the station buffet at Milford Junction. The audience knows no more what lies behind the close-up shot of Alec Harvey's hand pressed for a long second on her shoulder than does the garrulous friend who so cruelly meets Laura Jesson at the one moment in her life when she needs most to be left alone. Alec goes, and the camera follows the friend to the tea-counter, and then turns back to the little table. Laura Jesson has gone. A moment later she returns, pale and faint. Only at the end of the film, when we see the parting once more on the emotional plane of Laura Jesson herself, do we realise what happened in those brief moments.

The structure of the main part of the film is an unspoken confession as Laura sits by the fire, that same night, darning and thinking, while her husband sits on the sofa quietly doing his crossword puzzle and unconscious of the emotional sickness from which his wife is suffering. In the monologue of the commentary she relates exactly what happened. It seems as though she must go over it all again in every detail to bring herself back to emotional sanity. The conventions of the monologue and of the flash-back are perfectly used because of this very need to explain which Celia Johnson's voice implies. The story from brief encounter to final parting is told right through in the realistic setting of the life of a British provincial town with its super-cinema, its cafes with luncheons

and teas to orchestral accompaniments, its streets and its dark prosaic station.

The symbolism, the visual imagery of the cinema, is never long absent from poetically conceived films with emotional themes. The atmosphere of emotion and situation can be revealed with astonishing emphasis when this poetic technique is used aptly. Milford Junction, place of the lovers' meetings and partings, becomes this symbol. Since this technique is a matter of timing and relation to the rhythm of the film as a whole, bare statements in words cannot reveal that aptness. The skill of David Lean's direction is revealed in the manner the express trains which pass through but never stop at Milford symbolise the passion in which the lovers are involved, whereas the slow "stopping" trains which they have to catch so continuously carry them to their families and to their unromantic responsibilities. The dark, smoky passageways are symbolic of the loneliness of surreptitious waiting. The buffet where they sit during their last minutes each Thursday becomes the prototype of transient shelter. So, too, most of the additional characters, the ticket collector, the barmaid whom he courts with unromantic sang-froid, the woman in the cafe orchestra, all become grotesques, symbols of thwarted or casual love as seen through a lover's eyes.

It is difficult to say to whom credit is due for the achievement of this film. David Lean directs, with Anthony Havelock-Allan and Ronald Neame in charge of production on behalf of the Cineguild unit, which is part of the Rank organisation. The theme and script are the contribution of Noel Coward. When the same group produced *This Happy Breed* nearly two years earlier they had Celia Johnson, one of the finest of our British screen actresses, playing the housewife in this story of a London suburban family. In *Brief Encounter* she gives one of the most moving and restrained performances in British cinema of recent years. The film is hers, for the story is told by her and from her viewpoint. Trevor Howard, who plays the doctor, is a stage actor of distinction who has in *Brief Encounter* his first important part in a film. There is no false intonation, no touch of over-acting in either performance. If there had been, or if the scripting had led to the intrusion of this false note in either part, the film would have lost its atmosphere of actuality and become another screen romance with an unhappy ending. It is this quality of realism which makes *Brief Encounter* notable.

At a time when the quantity of film production in Hollywood and Britain seems to necessitate so many adaptations from plays, in which situation and action depend too much on words to make good cinema, it is important to recognise in this film the continuous use of the powers of the film medium. This is developed to the full in the final scenes of the parting, repeated now as the climax of Laura Jesson's self-told experience. After the close-up shot of Alec's hand on her shoulder, he goes out. The sound of the approaching express train we have heard so often before attracts her attention. She rushes out to throw herself under it. But again it is her social sanity which saves her: suicide is not in her nature. She lets the train rush by her, its lights hitting her agonised face with a staccato pattern matching the roar of its wheels. Then she returns to her friend in the buffet, whose unceasing conversation pours over, emphasised by

huge close-ups of the talking mouth. The nightmare is achieved not by words alone as Laura Jesson tells her story, but by the combination of image and sound assembled often into a rhythmic composition which matches the sweep of the emotional power of that story. This is the poetic use of the medium of cinema for which the critic waits.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE

(IVAN GROZNII)

U.S.S.R., 1943—45 10 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Central Cinema Studios, Alma-Ata
DIRECTION AND SCRIPT:	Sergei M. Eisenstein
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Eduard Tisse and Andrei Moskvina
ART DIRECTION:	I. Shpinel
MUSIC:	Sergei Prokofiev

CAST

Ivan the Terrible (Tsar Ivan IV of Russia)	..	..	<i>Nikolai Cherkassov</i>
Anastasia Romanovna, the Tsarina	..	..	<i>Ludmila Tselikovskaya</i>
Euphrosinia Staritskaya, the Tsar's Aunt	..	..	<i>Serafima Birman</i>
Vladimir Staritsky, her son	..	..	<i>Pavel Kadochnikov</i>
"Grigori", afterward Malyuta Skuratov	..	..	<i>Mikhail Zharov</i>
Alexei Basmanov	..	..	<i>Amvrosi Buchma</i>
Fyodor Basmanov, his son	..	..	<i>Mikhail Kuznetsov</i>
Prince Andreiev Kurbsky	..	..	<i>Mikhail Nazvanov</i>
Boyar Fyodor Kolychei	..	..	<i>Andrie Abrikosov</i>
Pimen, Archbishop of Novgorod	..	..	<i>.. A. Mgebrov</i>
An Archdeacon	..	..	<i>Maxim Mikhailov</i>
Nikola "Big-Fool", a beggar simpleton	..	..	<i>V. I. Pudovkin</i>
An Ambassador	..	..	<i>S. Timoshenko</i>
A Foreigner	..	..	<i>.. A. Rumniev</i>

Ivan the Terrible, Eisenstein's sixth major film, was made during the war in the Alma Ata Studios behind the Urals in the Kazakh Soviet Republic of Central Asia. It was intended to be the first of three biographical films of the sixteenth-century Tsar Ivan IV, who was contemporary with Britain's Queen Elizabeth, and who was responsible for gathering under one rule the many autonomous Russian principalities and so became the first Tsar of a united Russia. The second part of the film was completed in 1946, but banned by the Soviet authorities on the main grounds that it misrepresented the Tsar's character and did not show him as a progressive statesman. The third part was never made. On the other hand, Part One is a Stalin Prize film.

The film's structure is episodic, and divides into seven narrative sections: (i) The coronation of the young Tsar and his challenge to the Boyars, headed by his aunt Euphrosinia, in front of the ambassadors from the foreign powers gathered in the Cathedral; (ii) His wedding to Anastasia Romanovna, and his quelling of a popular riot initiated by his enemies; (iii) Ivan's siege of Kazan,

and the disloyalty of the weak Prince Kurbsky; (iv) Ivan's sickness and the open disloyalty of the Boyars when they think him to be dying; (v) Ivan's power is crumbling, and his beloved wife is poisoned by Euphrosinia; (vi) Ivan mourning his dead wife as she lies in state; except for a few faithful followers, he is completely deserted; (vii) Ivan, in retirement at Alendrov, receives a great procession of the common people who beg him to return to power.

Eisenstein's treatment of this large historical theme, intended to rouse the national spirit of Soviet Russia whilst she was at war with Germany, is not in the style of the normal technique of cinema. The treatment is deliberately larger than life, like that of Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. The characters speak a language which is archaic and stylised, and they act with a technique which combines simplicity with grandeur, in the very opposite tradition to the detailed naturalism of most contemporary cinema. Eisenstein is concerned with theme rather than narrative, human symbolism rather than individual characterisation. Each episode is conceived like a book from an epic poem or a section from a Greek tragedy; the characters are grouped together, speak their words and especially where speech is minimised or altogether absent, use mime to emphasise their reactions to the situation. Always the effect is both larger and simpler than actuality, and the technique has a certain parallel to that of the melodrama of the days of Griffith. Yet since the conception of *Ivan the Terrible* is poetic and epic, the intention and the total design of the film is complex. The technical resemblance to melodrama is superficial only.

Since the main trend of cinema technique is realistic it may be objected that Eisenstein is retrogressive in retaining the simpler, bolder style characteristic of Russian silent cinema. The sound film, however, is a medium of the eye reinforced by the ear. Realism is only one of the methods of treatment which are all quite natural to the medium. Stylisation, provided it is based on a cinematic conception and technique, is as correct on the screen as it is in the static image on a painter's canvas. What is unnatural to the true expression of the cinema is its use as a mere recording medium dominated by words or by lack of visual movement. This Eisenstein decidedly does not do. Rather does he attempt to widen the range of cinematic expression by developing new relationships and timing of sound and image, as explained rather elaborately in chapters I and IV of his book "The Film Sense", with reference to his previous film in a similar style, *Alexander Nevsky* (1938).

The outstanding figure in the film is that of Nikolai Cherkassov as Ivan. His appearance and voice lend themselves to the purposes of Eisenstein. He portrays the Tsar as a creature of single moods according to the needs of the situation; he is angry, happy, challenging, loving, hating, mourning. He acts on the grand scale with ease and deliberation, powerful but never melodramatic because his largest moments are born of intense feeling. He is never submerged by the almost mathematical complexity of Eisenstein's sense of design. Euphrosyne is a hawk-figure, compact of evil, bending stealthily under the low doorways, sinister and watchful. Kurbsky is handsome, empty and vacillating. Only

the Tsarina seems to lack the grandeur of the symbolism implied by her position: she underplays too much in the tradition of realistic cinema.

To emphasise the great theme of Russian unification under a progressive monarch and his final triumph against the Boyars with the support of the common people, Eisenstein had the cameras of Moskvín and Tissé and the musical score of Prokofiev. Tissé has been his cameraman since *Strike* which they made together in 1924. Prokofiev had worked with Eisenstein on *Alexander Nevsky*. Eisenstein is his own set-designer. This team of artists produce astonishing collective results, the combined powers of photography, music and montage which merge in the all-embracing film medium. An example is the carefully constructed sequence of the coronation in which long shots of the whole cathedral are alternated with remarkable portrait close-ups, the heads of the chief actors, and the heads, framed in gigantic white ruffs, of the old and cunning ambassadors of Western Europe. Ivan is crowned without emphasis on the individual: the back of his head and his hands receiving the symbol of office are all that are shown. A voice of astonishing bass echoing quality rises in quarter tones with a paean of thanksgiving. The Emperor turns and the ritual shower of coins is poured over his head and splashes to the ground in a stream of dancing light. The women smile, and the huge menacing heads of the Boyars threaten the young Czar. Only after all this play with music, ritual and symbolic portraiture does Ivan announce his challenge to the old powers in plain and ringing speech.

Throughout the film these sequences recur in which pattern and design become motifs to enlighten the theme of the film. The heavy claustrophobic Byzantine buildings with their formalised images of God and Man are the background to intense court intrigue. The marriage celebration becomes a pageant of moving designs, the crash of the huge goblets of wine seen through a perspective of ornamental curving swan-necks, the rich barbaric ceremonial shattered by the peasant invasion which calls Ivan to action as the leader of his people, and turns revolt into friendly laughter. But always there are the great shadows and all-enclosing walls to hem in the free spirit of the Tsar and bind him to the intrigues of the ancient ways. The siege of Kazan is also a matter of patterned images, like the *Iliad* portrayed on a Greek vase. The Tsar, the leader of his people, emerges from his rich tent on the crest of a curving hill, and he stands alone, a dark heroic figure, whilst the line of his officers is ranged in a pattern beneath him. His troops in procession march in a rhythm of moving lines. There is no realism in this portrait of an army only the order and precision of an artist's mobile composition. Even the terrible moment of agony for the Mongolian prisoners shot through by the arrows of their countrymen loosed from the walls of besieged Kazan is an agony emphasised by the artistry of the close-shots, the pain of death enlarged by the formal angles of the dead men's bound and twisted bodies.

The tolling of varying bells recurs through the film, at the coronation, at the wedding ceremony, and at the Tsar's supposed deathbed. Their religious symbolism of sound enriches the Byzantine ikons and books of the priests and

the painted images on the walls. Life and art combine in the film. The huge heads of the actors turn slowly in significant close-up and merge with the watchful heads and eyes in relief or paint which stare down on the living from the vantage ground of art. The sardonic climax of this religious ritual is when the sick Tsar peers suspiciously from under the pages of the huge illuminated Testament placed over his face by the Archbishop. Always the symbolism of objects merges into the symbolism of people. In Ivan's palatial study the shadow of the skeletal globe stands in huge relief on the wall while he discusses his foreign policy with his envoy to the British Queen Elizabeth.

In the last scenes the symbolism of locality is uppermost. In the foreground the self-exiled Tsar stands watching the vast procession of the common people who have come to intercede with him. The procession itself spreads over a vast plain. The claustrophobia of the intriguing court is forgotten in the open sunshine which lights the great curving line of people who kneel to the Tsar. The film ends, therefore, on a note of triumph in which Ivan and his people are joined under the open skies of Russia.

CHARLES CHAPLIN

(Note: The Archive Season at the National Film Theatre should include *Shoulder Arms*, *The Kid*, *A Woman of Paris*, *The Gold Rush*, *City Lights* and *Modern Times*, but these films are locked away in the vaults until their maker decides that they may be seen again. Even so, Chaplin cannot be left out; the best of his early two-reel comedies must suffice to point the way.

TANGO TANGLE

U.S.A., 1914

1 reel

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Keystone
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Ford Sterling, Fatty Arbuckle and Chester Conklin.

THIS Keystone production was first issued in this country in September, 1914, and was re-issued in 1920 as *Charlie's Recreation*. Charlie acts without his moustache and Ford Sterling without his beard. Fatty Arbuckle plays a prominent part. The absence of the usual items of get-up and the fact that the action all takes place in interiors which look real rather than artificial suggests that the film may have been made impromptu at a dance hall.

DOUGH AND DYNAMITE

U.S.A., 1915

2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Keystone
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Chester Conklin, Fritz Schade, Phyllis Allen, Charley Chase, Slim Summerville and Wallace MacDonald

CHAPLIN signed on with the Keystone studios in December, 1914; in all, he made 35 films for them in a year. *Dough and Dynamite* is a typical Keystone slapstick film, beginning a new series of longer and more elaborate Chaplin comedies.

Charlie works in a combination bakery and restaurant. There are gooey fights between him and Chester Conklin. The picture ends in an explosion when strikers place dynamite in a loaf of bread.

*Outstanding scene: Chaplin deftly making doughnuts by forming bracelets of dough around his wrist—and slipping out.

*The assessments in this section are taken from the biography of Chaplin by Theodore Huff.

THE CHAMPION

U.S.A., 1915 **2 reels**

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Essanay
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin
PHOTOGRAPHY: Rollie Totheroh

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Bud Jamison, Edna Purviance, Leo White, Ben Turpin, Lloyd Bacon and Broncho (G.M.) Anderson

THIS film, among the best of Chaplin's early work, was one of the first he made for the Essanay Company after leaving Keystone. It shows how Charlie takes a job as sparring partner and is so successful (with the aid of an iron horseshoe in his glove) that he is matched in a championship fight, where he manages to hold his own until his bulldog intervenes to help him to victory.

*Outstanding scenes: The dog refusing to eat the frankfurter until Charlie has put salt on it; Charlie showing off to Edna while training; imitating the villainous Leo's pose, Charlie scratches the wrong head; the mock farewell to his dog before the championship bout; the general sense of timing in the boxing match.

A NIGHT IN THE SHOW

U.S.A., 1915 **2 reels**

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Essanay
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance, Dee Lampton, Leo White, May White, Bud Jamison, James T. Kelly, John Rand and Paddy McGuire

THIS film is based on the Fred Karno skit "A Night in an English Music Hall" in which Chaplin had appeared many times on the stage. The film was released by Essanay on the 20th November, 1915. While not subtle, *A Night in the Show* is a laugh-provoking comedy—about the funniest of the Essanays. Chaplin plays a double role—an inebriated gentleman in the orchestra and a bum in the balcony (in a sort of cockney make-up). Mr. Pest causes as much disturbance in the orchestra as Mr. Rowdy in the balcony. The former changes his seat several times and annoys the musicians. Then he proceeds to interfere with the performers on the stage. Rowdy throws ice cream cones from the balcony and Mr. Pest, borrowing a fat boy's pie, squelches some sour singers. Alarmed at the Fire Eater, Rowdy turns the fire hose on the stage, also drenching those in the audience.

*Outstanding scenes: Seated next to a homely woman, Mr. Pest quickly changes his seat, turns and sickly applauds the woman as part of the show; flirting with a girl, he accidentally places his hands on her husband's; scratches a match on an oriental dancer's bare feet; the last close-up of Charlie with a broken umbrella over his head.

THE PAWNSHOP

U.S.A.,

2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Mutual
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin
PHOTOGRAPHY: William C. Foster and Rollie Totheroh

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance, John Rand, Henry Bergman, Albert Austin, Eric Campbell and James T. Kelly

THIS picture is one of the most famous of the Mutuals. Although handicapped by a restricted locale, Chaplin demonstrates his genius for comic invention by extracting comedy out of everything about him. Briefly the story deals with Charlie's encounters with another clerk, his waiting on some strange customers and his foiling of a robbery. It is the little incidents which make the picture so extraordinary.

*Outstanding scenes: Charlie teetering on a ladder—after falling, his first thought is to see if his watch is still running; turning, his duster gets caught in an electric fan and feathers fly; fired by the boss, he pantomimes that he has six children; although besting the clerk in the tussle, Charlie pretends he is hurt when Edna enters so she will comfort him; in the kitchen he runs dishes and his hands through a dry wringer, impersonates a Hawaiian by putting a necklace of dough around his neck and strumming a ladle; and the celebrated alarm clock scene (Chaplin appraises the clock as if he were a doctor examining a patient, opens it with a can opener, pulls the inside out with a dentist's pliers, "kills" the wriggling springs by squirting oil on them as if they were worms, and hands back the whole mess as worthless).

EASY STREET

U.S.A., 1917

2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Mutual
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION: Charles Chaplin
PHOTOGRAPHY: William C. Foster and Rollie Totheroh

CAST

Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance, Albert Austin, Eric Campbell, James T. Kelly, Henry Bergman, John Rand, Charlotte Mineau and Frank J. Coleman

THIS is the most famous of the Chaplin-Mutual pictures. Though not as hilariously funny as some, it has the most cleverly worked-out story, with overtones

in which some have read social criticism and others satire on puritanism. Charlie, a derelict, wanders into a Mission. Reformed by the minister and the angelic Edna, his first act is to return the collection box he had stolen. There is a terrific street brawl going on in Easy Street, the toughest section of the city. Policemen are carried back on stretchers. Help needed, Charlie gets a job on the force. He overcomes the giant bully by asphyxiating him with the gas street lamp. With Edna he dispenses charity among the poor. The bully escapes and, after a hectic chase, the little policeman overcomes him this time by dropping a stove out of the window. Edna is threatened in a dive. A dope fiend knocking him on his hypodermic needle, Charlie is affected with wondrous superman results. In the end, "Love Backed by Force; Forgiveness Sweet, Bring Hope and Peace, to Easy Street" (sub-title). All the reformed inhabitants walk sedately to the New Mission.

*Outstanding comic scene: Charlie pinning a medal on a little man with a dozen children and tossing food at the brood as if they were chickens.

THE CURE

U.S.A., 1917 **2 reels**

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Mutual
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION:	Charles Chaplin
PHOTOGRAPHY:	William C. Foster and Rollie Totheroh

CAST

*Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance, Eric Campbell, John Rand, Albert Austin,
Frank J. Coleman, James T. Kelley, Henry Bergman*

ABOUT the funniest of the Mutuals, this comedy—in addition to fast action—also has some subtle pantomime and examples of Chaplin's graceful agility. Charlie (wearing a light coat and straw hat) is wheeled in to take the water cure. While Charlie is being treated by a rough masseur, the drunk bellhop, ordered to dispose of Charlie's trunkful of liquor, tosses the bottles in the well with amazing effects on the patients—and on Charlie, too, who is spun around by the revolving door until he falls in the pool. The next morning, promising Edna to reform, Charlie falls down the well.

*Outstanding scenes: Charlie, spinning in a revolving door, also involves an attendant, a big man with gout; the scene with the nurse who urges Charlie to drink the water and who has to demonstrate her muscles to prove its value; the toy dog blamed for the water Charlie spills; Charlie believes the winks of the big gouty man are for him instead of Edna back of him; each time the big man opens the curtain in the steamroom, Charlie assumes a different statuesque pose; Charlie's expressions as a man is being pounded by the masseur and his proclaiming of the latter as "the winner"; his tripping of two drunks who annoy Edna, gallantly moving the "bodies" with his cane so she can pass.

THE ADVENTURER

U.S.A., 1917

2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Mutual
SCRIPT AND DIRECTION:	Charles Chaplin
PHOTOGRAPHY:	William C. Foster and Rollie Totheroh

CAST

*Charles Chaplin, Edna Purviance, Eric Campbell, Henry Bergman, Albert Austin,
Frank J. Coleman, Kono*

THE most popular of the Mutuals, *The Adventurer* is old-time screen comedy at its best and most typical—with plenty of wild chases, slapstick and clever pantomime. Charlie, an escaped convict, eludes the guards by tripping them and slipping under their legs. In a stolen bathing suit, he rescues two wealthy women from drowning. Invited to their home, the gallant “sportsman” is feted at a house party until Edna’s jealous suitor sees a picture in the paper of the escaped convict. The prison guards arrive and Charlie takes to flight again.

*Outstanding scenes: Charlie’s entrance—his head emerging from the sand into a guard’s rifle; throwing rocks, he feels the shoe of a guard back of him; awakening in the big house, Charlie wonders at his striped pyjamas and feels the brass bars of the bed; a bottle pops—Charlie throws up his hands, then covers by smoothing his hair; eating on a balcony with Edna, he drops ice cream down his pants and on the bare back of the mother below; in the final chase, Charlie puts a lampshade on his head and “freezes” as the guards run by.

AN EVENING WITH LAUREL & HARDY

DOUBLE WHOOPEE

U.S.A., 1928 2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Hal Roach
DIRECTION: Lewis Foster

CAST

Laurel and Hardy, with Jean Harlow in a small part.

AFTER appearing in films as independent comics, Laurel and Hardy joined up in 1926 and made many silent two-reelers, of which this film is a good example. There is little or no plot, Laurel and Hardy being initially mistaken for visiting royalty in a large hotel lobby, but ultimately having to resume their correct status as doormen. All the brilliant timing and by-play that they made famous is exploited to the full: Hardy's coy delight in moments of triumph and his pitiful direct appeal for audience sympathy when things go wrong; Laurel's child-like innocence and occasional, unexpected tantrums which result in a finger being jabbed in Mr. Hardy's eye. Most of all, more of those wonderfully controlled exhibitions of civilized sadism are on view, the hapless victims patiently taking the worst that the boys can dish out before responding in kind. Two additional elements make *Double Whoopee* unique among Laurel and Hardy films. There is a glorious, unrestrained take-off of the Von Stroheim of *Foolish Wives* and a startling appearance by Jean Harlow, exuding glamour and sex-appeal in one short but delicious comedy sequence.

LAUGHING GRAVY

U.S.A., 1931 2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: M.G.M.
DIRECTION: James W. Horne

CAST

Laurel and Hardy.

Laughing Gravy is the name of a dog befriended by the pair, who have to fight off the unwelcome attentions of a singularly pugnacious landlord in order to retain him. The action is faster than in many of their films and the knockabout is more aggressive than usual, leaving the audience in a state of mental and physical exhaustion. Typical of the tricks learnt during an apprenticeship with Mack Sennett is the great final crash into the barrel of frozen rainwater.

THE LAUREL & HARDY MURDER CASE

U.S.A., 1932 3 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Hal Roach
DIRECTION: James Parrott

CAST

Laurel and Hardy.

ALL comedians were expected, sooner or later, to make a "haunted house" film and Laurel and Hardy were no exceptions. However, they found many twists to add to the old plot, notably in a mild but effective satire on the "tough cop" tradition of the gangster films of the day and in one supreme piece of comic invention involving a bat. Laurel has plenty of scope for his frightened whimper and Hardy is kept busy with his "let-me-attend-to-this", a phrase that strikes a chill into the heart of the beholder like the first ominous rumble of an approaching earthquake.

THE MUSIC BOX

U.S.A., 1932 3 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Hal Roach
DIRECTION: James Parrott
PHOTOGRAPHY: Walter Lundin

CAST

Laurel and Hardy.

"As is well known, Messrs. Laurel and Hardy are world martyrs. Their lives are spent in undertaking tasks of apparent simplicity but actually full of devastating snags. Usually they succeed in carrying them out to the desired conclusion, but not before everything for miles has been smashed, crumpled, and utterly destroyed. But through it all these amiable creatures, though undergoing adventures and hardships which make Ulysses look like a stay-at-home, stagger along with an invincible optimism in the ultimate charity of Providence. The pettishness of Oliver, and the tears of Stan, are but fleeting clouds over the sunshine, and in the end their bowlers remain battered but unbowed.

"*The Music Box* is a modern version of the legend of Sisyphus. A large packing-case containing a pianola has to be transported up an enormously long flight of steps and into an inconveniently situated house. Six times at least the summit is achieved and six times the packing case sails down the steps, sometimes in solitary grandeur, sometimes with Laurel and/or Hardy attached. Unseen gold-fish pools ensnare them. Ropes break. Hats become mixed. Fuses explode. Fingers are pinched and noses flattened. The consignee's house is entirely destroyed and he in turn destroys the pianola.

"A tragedy, in fact, that would have warmed the heart of Aristotle. Indeed, I sincerely hope that the proposed Cinema University will institute a Laurel and Hardy lectureship. Their films are always well-directed and brilliantly cut, and will be standard text-books long after the de Milles and Vertovs have vanished into the waste-bin.

"The recording is as usual excellent and special commendation should go to the noise made by the pianola when it is dropped (which is often). It emits a pleasing jangle, as of Aeolian harps and church bells in the distance, which wanders engagingly round the bruised heads of its conveyors.

"From every point of view this is the best short of the year. It keeps up the great tradition set by *Aerial Antics* and *Laughing Gravy*. I recommend you to see it twice."

COUNTY HOSPITAL

U.S.A., 1932 2 reels

PRODUCTION COMPANY:	Hal Roach
DIRECTION:	James Parrott
PHOTOGRAPHY:	Walter Lundin

CAST

Laurel and Hardy, with Billy Gilbert.

THE early success of Laurel and Hardy was established by their two- and three-reelers. Of these, *County Hospital* is one of the best and most characteristic.

The plot—an instance of their variation on a basic theme—is no more than a visit by Laurel to Hardy who lies in hospital with a broken leg. This situation gives them scope for sadistic comic by-play with surgical equipment; for satire on the ways of hospital visitors (Stan's inept offering of 'hard-boiled eggs and nuts') and of the proud egotism of the hypochondriac (Olly's splendid exit from the hospital, shown in a high angle shot, ostentatiously brandishing his vast, plaster-encased leg.)



